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Fang Tong, a kunqu actor, is more precious than a panda.

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Registration Bureau Ready to Do Business

By Xiao Rong

"You can talk in English with us" is the lofty promise made to foreign companies by the new Foreign Enterprise Registration Bureau (FERB) that will be set up by the State Administration for Industry & Commerce (SAIC).

No date has been announced yet about when the bureau will open. Eighty SAIC officials are competing for six positions as directors of the bureau.

"We are now trying to select cadres with mastery of both English and the legal expertise," said Wang Lingjun, vice director of FERB.

The selection process is the first of its kind, with both written and oral exams on English, law and key political knowledge.

"Moreover," said Wang, "the daily performance of the applicant will also be reviewed."

The new bureau will be in charge of registering foreign companies and foreign banks across China, including their representative offices.

"In short, FERB will provide a first permit for the legal management of foreign enterprises. The power of supervision is another of its duties to prevent and punish unlawful management," Wang said.

FERB will focus on simplicity, transparency and integrity of its registration procedures, said Wang.

Room Fit for an Emperor

By Wang Dandan

An average Beijinger would have to work seven years to pay for one night in the new "Emperor's Suite" at the Beijing Hotel. The ordinary citizen earns around 940 yuan or \$113 a month, according to Beijing Statistics Bureau.

For/ \$9,000 a night, the Beijing Hotel offers 500 square meters of Qing Dynasty chambers, with a view of the Imperial Palace. "Carved beams, a balcony, painted rafters, gilt and jade mosaics," promises the promotional blurb. "And most of all vivid imperial yellow illuminated by streaming light from the window, sets the imperial scene of yesterday."

The highest-price suites in town officially range from \$2,000-\$4,000 a night. But after a bout of bartering, our reporter made a member of the Grand Hotel Beijing staff knock the price down to \$1,200 from the original \$2,000.

The hotel is trying to recreate the experience of being an "emperor" in China, said Beijing Hotel public relations manager Tian Yu.

"It is internationally accepted that top-level hotels should have an emperor's suite," said Tian.

A standard room at the hotel costs around \$100 a night.

This is not the first emperor's suite in Beijing. The Grand Hotel opened its suite 10 years ago.



Photo by Jackey

Picasso Prints



By Shan Jinliang

An exhibition of "Black and White Image" Picasso prints will be held at the Art Museum of the China Millennium Monument from December 13.

The 161 original Picasso prints had previously been on display in Guangzhou and will be in Beijing until February 19, 2002. Admission is 20 yuan.

Photo by Baizi



Layoffs at Legend bring extra chill to the winter.

Photo by Chen Feng

City Feels IT Pinch

But amid layoffs, companies still hiring

By Shan Jinliang

In a bold move to break out of the worldwide information technology recession, key Beijing employers are trying to hire top international management staff even at the same time as they announced a fresh round of layoffs.

Nine behemoths of Zhongguancun Science Park - Legend, Tsinghua Tongfang, Beijing Centergate Technologies, Taiji Computer, Capital Telecom, Datang Telecom, Beijing Strong, Yongyou Software and Zhongguancun International Incubator - launched a high-profile recruitment drive for senior management and technicians on Sunday.

Forty-three senior posts with an annual salary of more than 150,000 yuan went on offer in the first joint recruitment drive of its kind. But with the recent round of layoffs at Zhongguancun, analysts and media quickly sized up the ruthless rationale of the new economy.

Layoffs

Since June 2000, layoffs have swept through websites including 263.net, Sohu.com, Sina.com and My8848. Those job losses now appear to have infected the whole information technology (IT) industry.

Legend, the largest PC maker in China, published a short announcement on November 3 on the website Sina.com, claiming it would "optimize its staff" by slashing 5% of jobs by the end of the year and another 5% next March.

FM365.com, jointly backed by Legend and AOL, will cut 30% of staff according to the same Legend announcement.

A Legend spokesman described the layoffs as a "normal adjustment" any company must conduct



A software vendor eyes the future

Photo by Lou Linwei

each year. But he also said the adjustment was a reflection of the depressed global economy.

"We took a different approach from previous years to ensure competitiveness for future development and to streamline our operation as the whole IT industry has been under a dark cloud lately."

While it is not rare for Zhongguancun companies to cut 30% of their staff, some media analysts remarked on the symbolic significance of Legend layoffs, as the company is something of talisman to the industry.

Insiders from the marketing department of Tsinghua Unisplendour said their company had cut the same percentage of its staff as Legend. An employee at Founder who declined to be named confirmed job cuts there too. Analysts predict these are just the beginning and job losses will peak next

July. Headhunting companies say 2,000-4,000 more people may be looking for jobs next year.

Global chill

Some doubt the new round of layoffs in Zhongguancun is related to world events as the September 11 attack on the US seemed unlikely to affect the Chinese IT industry, not strongly connected to the global market.

Others see layoffs as unavoidable, as Zhongguancun companies do not own their own technology. Legend does not own its core business technology, which comes from overseas. Job cuts at Intel must hurt Zhongguancun, they say.

Job cuts are just the results of bad business plans, said Bao Yueqiao, president of Ourgames.com.

"FM365 did not have a clear direction in its investment," he said. "When the whole IT industry cooled down, all the problems appeared suddenly."

During the web boom, he said, companies hired many more personnel than they needed. Legend President Yang Yuanqing said the 2000 Internet boom made the IT market grow in an unusual way: pay in advance.

"The main reason for some companies cutting jobs is they set an overly optimistic goal for this year based on last year's performance," said Shen Lin, senior analyst with the International Data Corp (China), "and so adjustments must be made to react to new market demand."

Feasting in famine

It is a commonplace for companies to lay off excess workforce, said Zhao Mulan, vice director of Zhongguancun Management Committee.

But while IT salaries in general are being squeezed, the salaries of senior management are still rising. Companies laying off workers are also searching for system analysts and technicians.

Companies in Zhongguancun are still recruiting fresh talents. At the beginning of this month, Haidian District Personnel Bureau and the Human Resources Service Center of the district organized 15 companies including Tsinghua Tongfang, Yongyou Software to go to Xi'an and Chengdu.

With a US recruitment branch up and running, Zhongguancun recently opened two more in Europe and Japan to attract overseas Chinese. The latest drive is to hire executives with international management skills and knowledge of international high-tech trends.

Wang Zhi, chairman of Great Wall Group, predicts one third of the world's IT producers will move to China five years after WTO entry.

EDITOR: LIU FENG DESIGNER: PANG LEI

By Xiao Rong

The granting of mining licences will be restricted to provincial governments to strengthen supervision and management of mineral resources, announced the Ministry of Land and Resources on Monday.

The announcement was made by Tian Fengshan, Minister of Land and Resources, at a national TV-telephone meeting on the management of mining resources.

The meeting was held after a recent coalmine explosion in Zhongyang County of north China's Shanxi province, the fifth tragedy out of a string of coalmine blasts in Shanxi in the last ten days.

Tian said that despite the country's ban on illegal mining, the recent irregularities in the mining

sector have led to wastage of resources and the degradation of the environment, seriously affecting individual property and life.

"The country will strengthen regulation and management of the current exploitation of mining resources," Tian added.

According to the requirements of the State Council, the provincial land and resources administrative

departments should be responsible for approving mining licences in localities.

In terms of evaluating exploration applications for the 34 different types of mines in China, provincial land and resources authorities should provide evaluations before applying to provincial governments for their final project approval.

The ministry vowed to continue shutting down mines operating without permits, or stopping illegal transfer of their operation rights.

A nationwide overhaul of mining management has just been concluded, according to Tian. The Ministry has sent four investigative groups to inspect mining management in 50 counties and townships and 40 mines in 20

provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities.

The move was one of the country's remedial measures taken on coalmine security after a series of serious industrial safety problems this year. Official statistics show that 11,882 small state-owned coalmines have been shut down in the first ten months of this year.

State to Restrict Issuing of Mining Licences

No Legal Aid, No Lawyer Certificate

By Shan Jinliang

Every lawyer, professional and part-time, will have to handle at least one legal aid case annually, said the new regulation on legal aid issued by Beijing Judicial Bureau.

Lawyers will not be able to pass the annual check-up and may face punishment if they refuse to perform or perform unsatisfactorily, the regulation reveals.

Legal aid refers to a system that offers legal service free of charge or at negligible costs to parties with insufficient funds, or to special cases.

The regulation further stipulates that the legal aid institutions, namely, the Legal Aid Center under the Municipal Judicial Bureau are supposed to examine all materials concerning legal aid cases ten days after they are received. The applicant can ask to re-examine a legal aid case after five days if he or she is refused assistance from the Legal Aid Center. The Center is then supposed to re-examine and inform the applicant in writing within 15 days. The Center is further entitled to suggest punishments for lawyers who perform badly.

The Center is supposed to send defense lawyers within three days after the People's Court calls for assistance in criminal cases.

Legal aid mainly serves laid-off workers, senior citizens, minors, the handicapped, women, workers from other regions, and those from marginalized social groups.

13 districts and counties among the total 18 have set up legal aid centers since June, 1997, when the municipal legal aid network was first set up. The city has handled 6,055 legal aid cases involving more than 50,000 people, and has won over 2 million yuan in compensation over 4 years.

Certificate Gives Creditors New Security

By Li Dan

The People's Court of Fengtai District announced on November 22 that its Creditor's Right Certificate System was in operation. It is the first court in Beijing to set up such a system.

The Agricultural Bank of China Fengtai Branch, Rural Credit Cooperatives Union of Nanyuan in Fengtai County and Rural Credit Cooperatives Union of Lugouqiao are the first three financial organizations to receive certificates for the creditor right. These three organizations are owed a total of 3.25 million yuan.

Officials confirmed that once a debtor has been pronounced incapable of repaying a debt, the creditor could apply for the certificate. Thus, if the debtor later becomes capable of starting to repay the debt, the creditor can apply to the local court to enforce repayment, without time limit and extra fee.

Capital Police to Speak 4 Foreign Languages by 2008

By Shan Jinliang

All Beijing police on duty will be able to speak four foreign languages for basic communication before the 2008 Olympics kick off, proclaimed Ma Zhenchuan, director of the Beijing Municipal Public Security Bureau, recently.

To cater to the demands of the Olympics, the Public Security Bureau will spend seven years training police officers with intensive foreign language courses, Ma said. The planned courses in English, Japanese, Russian and Arabic will cover everyday situations faced by the police.

"No restrictions on age, no restrictions on post, no restrictions on level. The course will be a must for all police officers," the director said.

The bureau has listed the timetable for the course and classified the period into three stages: basic exercises, oral language intensive training and practice, and examinations. Every stage will be divided into primary, middle and advanced levels accordingly.

Foreign Airlines Allowed to Fly over Xinjiang

By Shan Jinliang

Eight foreign airlines, including Thai Airways International, Lufthansa, and Malaysia Airlines have recently been entitled by Civil Aviation Air of China (CAAC) to fly over northwest China's Xinjiang airspace.

Since Afghanistan closed its skies on September 17, the foreign airlines have had to use Xinjiang airspace to cross the area. It is calculated that over 400 foreign flights have passed through Xinjiang airspace over the first ten days this October.

The flight from Bangkok to Stockholm of Thai Airways International saved 90 minutes and tens of thousands of dollars by flying over Xinjiang. At the same time, other airlines have found that

air control facilities and staff quality of the Xinjiang air control administration are much better than those of the Kabul administration. Considering the economic and security factors, the foreign airlines switched from temporary flights to long-term cooperation with Urumqi, Xinjiang's capital city.

To cope with the extra flights, Urumqi air control departments upgraded the mutual reporting and coordination on inbound and outbound control with Kirghizstan and Pakistan. High caliber foreign language speaking staff of the Xinjiang air control administration offers a highly efficient information transmitting service to ensure the safe passage of the foreign airlines.

Foreign Travel Agencies Overstep Mark

By Jiang Zhong

Swedish Lotus Travel Euroasia AB Beijing Office and Italian Mistral Tour International Beijing Representative Office were punished last week for entering into business outside their legal remit.

The two agencies had both sent Chinese travelers to European tourist destinations taking profits, which is forbidden in the regulations on industry and commerce management of China. The illegal profits of the two companies have been confiscated, and a fine twice the amount of these profits has been levied. This was the second time Lotus Travel was punished.

At the beginning of 2001, the agency was punished for receiving foreign travelers in Beijing. After repeated infringements on the law, severe

sanctions are likely to affect its future operation in China.

Foreign travel agencies should only engage in consultancy and liaison activities in China, according to Fang Zehua, Director of Comprehensive Management Department of Beijing Tourism Administration. Receiving foreign tourists in China and sending Chinese nationals to foreign or domestic tourist destinations are both forbidden in the tourism management regulations of China. Besides, no European country is an officially granted tourist destination for Chinese citizens.

The restrictions on foreign tourist agencies operating in China will not be revised until at least five years after China's official entry to the World Trade Organization.

Chinese Youth Pursue UN Posts

By Zhao Hongyi

More than 4,000 Chinese applicants, mostly in their twenties and thirties, took the Test for United Nations (UN) Staff Reserves in Beijing and Shanghai on November 25, in the hope of securing a UN position.

The test, the second of its kind in China, was arranged by the recruitment authority of the UN, in cooperation with China's Ministry of Personnel (MOP).

According to an official of the international employment section at MOP, who declined to be named, the total number of applicants this year reached 6,272, twice the number of last year.

"We believe that the increased number of applicants can be attributed to China's entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO), because it is believed that China will play a more important role and engage more in world affairs," said Mr. Wang Xiaochu, director general of the Department for International Exchanges and Cooperation under MOP.

WTO is in fact an important topic in the test. Candidates were required to write an essay under 250 words to analyze the impact of China's WTO entry on the country itself. The essay was worth 30 points, and is quite important in the test, which has a total score of 200.

"There is still a long way to go even if you get through the test," explained Mr. Wang.

"It is only a candidate enrollment test, which means you can be listed in the personnel reserve prepared by the UN. In fact, the available posi-



Candidates get their heads down

Photo by Qian Bingge

tions in the organization are quite limited. We have a total of 280 qualified Chinese candidates in reserve and only 20 of them have found jobs in UN system till now."

Army Welcomes Graduate Students

By Xiao Rong

Among the 260 units that participated in last Saturday's '2002 employment fair for Beijing graduates of electronic and information technology', a group of units from the army, mostly research institutes, have attracted fresh attention from many holders of Master's and Doctor's degrees, for it's almost the first time for the army to recruit professionals openly in a job fair.

"We attended three employment fairs this year. According to rough statistics, we have received

over 100 applications up till now, some of which are from doctors and even post-doctors of renowned universities like Tsinghua and Peking universities," revealed Mr. Gan from a division of the nation's army.

Gan also said that from last year only students with a Master's Degree or higher can be enrolled by his unit, "Our army unit has begun to encourage more preferential policies for introducing talents with high degrees over these two years, which has been a major reason for attract-

ing local university graduates."

Zhao Yubin, director of University Students Employment Department of Beijing Personnel Bureau, expressed his confidence in the future trend of the army's openly employing university graduates.

"It's natural for the army to introduce excellent graduates with the global trend of high technology, for the army also needs professionals, just like other companies or government organizations," Zhao explained.



A foreigner consults with a member of staff of the Exit-Entry Administration

Photo by Chujiang

More Foreigners to Get Green Cards

By Ivy Zhang

Six reforms were announced at the working meeting of China's exit and entry administrations in Beijing on November 22, of which two items are closely related to foreigners. The items are:

1. Effective from January 1, 2002, visa approval authorities at ports of entry are entitled to grant tourist visas to foreign travel groups on site with a view to making procedures easier to handle, and to attracting more tourists from abroad.

2. Prior to 2003, a "Green Card" system will be established following international practice. Foreign senior managers, high-tech professionals or investors who have invested a great amount of money in China could be granted permanent residence status. Those who hold permanent residence credentials are able to enjoy preferential treatment like entry with visa waiver.

Regarding the newly posted measures stated above, Beijing Today interviewed Zhang Yindi, Deputy Director General of Exit-Entry Administration of the Ministry of Public Security of the People's Republic of China this Tuesday. Below are excerpts from the interview.

Beijing Today: Why is the Green Card system being set up in China now?

Zhang Yindi: The Green Card has existed in China for a long time. Since 1987, more than 90 foreigners have been granted with permanent residence status in China. In addition, some foreign emigrants who resided in China before the founding of People's Republic of China also held a Green Card. However, no system has been formulated in terms of applicants' qualification, examination and approval mechanism. In recent years, more and more Chinese with foreign nationalities are coming back to

China; foreign specialists live in China; the number of foreign investors in China is increasing; many foreigners get married with Chinese and want to stay in China; and the number of applicants for permanent residence status is rising. Thus, there is the proposal to establish a Green Card system now.

Beijing Today: When will the full set of regulations be finalized? What will be included?

Zhang: After research and discussion, the new system is supposed to be set up at the end of next year and will be implemented from the beginning of 2003. It will include applicants' qualification, for instance, candidates need to be high-tech professionals, or high-level management personnel, or big investors, or couples who live separately, or minors, or people who have been living in China for a certain period of time without any criminal record. In addition, application and approval procedures, issuance authorities and other related issues will be also clarified in the system.

Beijing Today: What benefits can Green Card holders get?

Zhang: Those who hold Green Card status are not restricted by a time limit on residence in China. They can exit or enter China anytime and go through frontiers more conveniently.

Beijing Today: Does China encourage people to apply for the Green Card?

Zhang: No. China is not a country of immigrants. The issuance of the Green Card depends on the needs of both applicants and of China. The nation will impose tight control over the issuance of the Green Card.

Citroën Fukang Kindles Price War

By Yang Xiao

Citroën Fukang (CF) began to promote its new model on Wednesday, costing 95000 yuan. It is the first family car model in China to be sold under 100,000 yuan. Analysts consider the launch as being influenced by the country's entry to the World Trade Organization (WTO).

According to a report from the State Bureau of Statistics, about 80.4% civilians are interested in purchasing a car costing less than 100,000 yuan. "People are now holding on to their money waiting for entry to WTO. From September, sales dropped sharply. These days we only sell 40-50 cars per day," said Su Hui, GM of Yanyuncun Auto Fair. Analysts consider CF, Santana and Jetta as 3 main car series. They hold over 70% market shares but seldom cut prices. Only if one breaks the "game rule" will the other two follow, and then a price war will certainly break out. Meanwhile lower priced cars like Xiali or Geely that are already fixed around the 50,000 to 100,000 yuan level will suffer strong competition.

Tom.com Buys Sharp Point

By Zhao Yijiang

Online and print media firm Tom.com announced on November 21 that it has entered an agreement for the acquisition of 100% stakes of Sharp Point Publishing for a mixture of cash and shares worth HK\$85.3 million.

Sharp Point is a Taiwan-based Chinese language youth magazine and book publisher. Its unaudited pro forma revenue in 2000 was HK\$106.6 million. Tom.com will pay HK\$42.6 million in cash and will issue 3.86 million Tom shares at HK\$5.51 a piece. In addition, existing shareholders of Sharp Point will also receive new shares in Tom.com print media vehicle in the future.

The move is the latest in a series of brick-and-mortar media acquisitions by Tom.com in the region.

Shares of Tom.com surged 5.56% to HK\$2.375 after the announcement.

China Unicom Shakes Hands with CNC

By Zhao Yijiang

China United Telecommunications Corporation (China Unicom) and China Netcom Corporation (CNC) entered a phone service agreement on November 22.

According to the agreement, China Unicom customers will be able to use CNC's IP Prepaid calling card and IP Direct Dial service with access numbers 17930 and 17931.

At the same time, IP phone customers of CNC can also call customers who use local telephone services and mobile phones of China Unicom.

CLIC Restoring Reinsurance

By Wang Yanyan

Yang Chao, Chairman of the board of both China Life Insurance Company (CLIC) and China Insurance International Holdings (CIH) says that CLIC is asking for permission to resume reinsurance on the Chinese mainland next year.

At the same time, he indicated that the Chinese authorities would keep their promises when entering into the World Trade Organization. The authority will cut regulation gradually, so insurance agents don't need to precede insurance to China reinsurance companies as before. It is estimated that this will take about four years. Yang says that CLIC can just take advantage of this opportunity to extend the market share on the Chinese mainland.

Telecom: Approved to Split

By Yang Xiao

China plans to break its telecoms monopoly, China Telecom, into two smaller firms as part of an industry restructuring, said Wu Jichuan on Sunday, the minister of the Information Industry, China's telecommunications regulator.

The Plan for the Split

"The State Council has already made a final decision. One of the new companies will keep the China Telecom name while the other merges with two smaller carriers created in recent years. The two new companies will divide along regional north-south lines," Wu said in a brief interview on CCTV.

The restructuring will see the end of two smaller companies, data carrier China Netcom and phone carrier Jitong Communications, which are to be absorbed into the new company covering northern China, according to Wu.

"China Telecom will retain the 20 southern provinces, while the 10 northern provinces will be added to China Netcom and Jitong and reorganized to form China Netcom-Jitong Co.," he said.

Wu said details of the reorganization were still being worked out. He said the decision "didn't relate to" mobile phone services and didn't say whether the new China Netcom would get a mobile license.

The Split Has Shutdown

Although the local phone business will not suffer, the ongoing split plan will cer-

tainly destroy long distance call business. The two companies will begin to count the costs from the commuting calls. Meanwhile the hot IP business is another reason for carving up the market.

The split has slowed growth. This year the fixed asset investment has dropped 30%. One insider from China Telecom Guangdong branch revealed that no one plunged in to invest before the final decision.

Deep Influence

Regulators hope competition will strengthen Chinese carriers as the country joins the World Trade Organization (WTO) on Saturday and prepares to open its closed market.

China Telecom still dominates fixed-line and Internet services, despite the loss of its monopoly in the 1990s. Its network is one of the world's biggest and most advanced, with some 100 million lines.

China has said it will allow foreigners to own up to 50% of fixed-line phone ventures two years after it joins the WTO, and 49% of mobile-phone firms after five years.

Regulators allowed the creation of smaller phone companies in the hope of spurring competition and innovation, but those carriers have taken only a tiny share of the market.

Caption: China Telecom has a majority market share of fixed-line business.

Photo by Chen Shuyi



Shaoezai Folds under Debts

By Wang Rui

Fangzhuang Shaoezai Food City, the first chain restaurant of Shaoezai in Beijing, has been closed down by the relevant legal authorities due to almost three million yuan rent indebtedness.

"Shaoezai" is the famous brand of Guangzhou Roast Goose Group. When talking about the shutdown, however, Lin Weicheng, president of the Group said, "I'd rather the restaurant closed".

Cooperation Fails

Roast Goose Group's main business is authorized management. It distributes franchise to the chain restaurants owner, who pay for using the techniques and trademark 'Shaoezai' provided by Roast Goose. There were originally seven Shaoezai chain restaurants in Beijing, and the cooperation worked quite well at first. But the "honeymoon" of cooperation ended when the restaurants' business started to boom.

According to Lin, the restaurant owners indicated that no profit was made because the restaurant owners controlled the finances themselves. In recent years, Roast Goose Group earned around

three million yuan from the seven chain restaurants. "It's far less than what we should earn," said Lin. It's clear that the cooperation cannot be permanent.

Contract Not Watertight

When Lin sought to deal with the recurring conflicts between his Group and the investors by law, he found that the contract was so carelessly drawn up that few clauses in it could be applied.

"I was too hasty at that time. Without legal protections, problems could hardly be avoided." As a consequence, when Lin made the hard decision to end cooperation, he had to let his original partners continue to make use of the trademark 'Shaoezai' because the contract doesn't expire.

"They use the name of Shaoezai but aren't regulated by our Group. Our reputation is seriously at stake," said Lin. His enthusiasm for the shutdown of Fangzhuang Shaoezai Food City is thus more than understandable.



A man walks past the closed door of Fangzhuang Shaoezai

Photo by Chen Shuyi

By Sun Zhen

Michael Yu, principal of Beijing's New Oriental School (NOS), has recently taken a leading stake in investing ten million yuan to register a new corporation. NOS will entrust administration and logistics of the school to the new corporation, although the latter has no power to control the school.

Founded in 1993, NOS has become a renowned English language training base for those planning to study abroad. Last year, the annual income of NOS was about 90 million yuan, with the brand value estimated at almost one billion yuan. Nonetheless, NOS still does not permanently recruit its own teachers, only rents its premises, and has little fixed assets. In a certain

New Oriental School Clarifies Property Rights



sense, the fate of the school remains uncertain.

In 1997, the Ministry of Education brought in new regulations on running community schools. When a teaching institution disbands, it should liquidate its property according to related laws. During the process, the teachers' wages and insurance premium must be paid first, and the investment of the sponsor should then be returned. The remains will be collected as a whole and will be used to develop other social teaching projects.

Such regulations made Yu think hard about the future of NOS, since in China the distinc-

tion between a school and training corporation is not clear.

The new corporation thus provides the best short term solution to the problem of property right, until new policies are promulgated. If the corporation comes onto the market, the development pace of the school will increase. The new corporation will deal with the businesses derived from the school, such as publishing, network educating, and teaching software. Scholars and experts involved in this project believe NOS will provide new valuable experience to other schools.

Zhu Jianqiu I Must Win Again

By Yang Xiao

Zhu Jianqiu has finally appeared in the public eye once again. Zhu, former GM of Founder Science & Technology (FST), who was fired 5 months ago, seems to have been erased from collective memory. This

time Zhu is acting as president of Shenzhen listed company Zarva Tech Group Co. Ltd. He attended a press conference on November 21 for cooperation with Nasdaq listed Hi-tech company Brocade.

Zarva will deputize for Brocade's products on the Chinese mainland that were valued at tens of millions of yuan. Zarva's move is considered as its first step into the IT field. Although Zhu seemed very happy at the conference, his smile still froze when he was asked about FST.

Downcast Hero

Zhu Jianqiu resigned his post as GM of FST on June 10, less than two weeks after he was fired from his post as vice-president of the parent company Peking University Founder Group Co.

FST is a Shanghai listed company. Its business mainly includes selling Founder PCs. FST said in a statement that its vice-president and its assistant CEO have also resigned.

In an interview with the *Securities Times*, Zhu said he resigned to put an end to the protracted dispute between the affiliate and its parent company, and to help maintain the reputation of Peking University.

The affiliate and its parent company have been embroiled in a dispute over the composition of FST's board. The parent company, firing Zhu in late May, accused the latter of planning a proxy war.

Founder Group owns only 3.7% of FST but is its largest shareholder. Founder Group also accused FST of allegedly filing a misleading financial report, a charge the affiliate denies.

Zhu summarized the lesson he has learnt, "FST has a bad system of stock options, and the

management has no say on the board. On the contrary, there is a fresh platform at Zarva and we have a say and don't need to worry about power conflicts inside the company."

Zarva Age

After 20 days of leaving FST, Zhu quietly entered Zarva Tech as president.

Zarva was a construction material company several years ago. Now it wants a new leader to reorient its business to the IT field. Zhu has a good record of selling PCs and relevant products in FST. He is considered the best person.

After 5 months Zhu Jianqiu has gradually planned his strategy. To be a proxy for an international IT giant like IBM or Brocade is a rational way of moving forward. "The IT market is the most globalized one. Developed countries like the U.S. or Germany take charge of top level R&D or advanced technologies; Japan and Korea have mid-range technology. In China, we only do localized technologies. Zarva will be a localized solution maker besides being a proxy for giants," reasoned Zhu.

Zhu took some talented managers and salespersons from FST for Zarva with him. Zhu believes he will win again.

Some Doubts

It seems the ink is still wet on the Zarva drawing board since reporters asked some questions which neither Zarva nor Zhu Jianqiu could answer well. Firstly, Zhu's strength is centered on partnership distribution sales modes, but Zarva has independent sales networks. The networks will take charge of main sales tasks and will form direct sales modes. Whether Zhu can adapt to the change remains to be seen.

Secondly, Zarva will be a solution maker in the future. But its business is so complicated that almost every part of the IT field is covered by Zarva's ambitions.

When a reporter asked, "do you have a long-term plan or policy?" Zhu's answer is revealingly simple, "No, we don't. But I believe no IT company in China has this sort of long-term development plan. No plan can keep up with the changes."



Michael Yu

Beijing Puts Pharmaceuticals at Top of List

By Zhao Hongyi

Beijing will put the pharmaceutical industry as one of the top priorities for development in the next five years. The average annual growth rate of the industry is put at 30% or higher. Xu Heyi, standing deputy director general of the Economic Planning Commission of Beijing made the above remarks at the "Seminar on International Cooperation of Pharmaceutical Industry of Beijing after China's Entry Into WTO" held November 25 in the capital.

"To this end, Beijing will do its utmost to invite pharmaceutical multinationals to invest and cooperate with local players in Beijing," said Mr. Xu.

The municipal government of Beijing has listed seven fields within the pharmaceutical sphere for promotion.

First and foremost is new pharmaceutical research and production in general terms.

Secondly and in particular, the local government has the intention to build the city into a central base for the research of pharmaceutical preparations, production of intravenous medicines, medicines for re-generational health and blood vessel health.

Research and development (R&D) of China's traditional herb medicines is another important issue for consideration. The final purpose is to promote a potential world wide



The city's drugstores are still up for better management after a decade of rapid development
Photo by Zhuang Jian

market for Chinese herb medicines.

Other issues include discovering and creating new types of medical bacteria with the technologies relating to DNA, inventing and producing new types of vaccines for prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases like malignant tumors, heart and blood vessel

diseases, and HIV AIDS.

Fifth, to make Beijing into a base for the production of medical equipment, materials and facilities for medical R&D. Multinationals are encouraged to cooperate with their partners and local institutions to enhance progress in this regard.

Qualified and certified foreign pharmaceutical wholesalers and retailers are welcome to establish chain drugstores by means of joint venture or other cooperative channels in the city.

Last but not least, multinationals are invited to take part in the construction of an advanced pharmaceutical information system locally.

According to Mr. Xu, the municipal government has also prepared five formats for multinationals' engagement in the local market. Acceptable channels include establishment of bases for production and R&D, cooperation with local enterprises for joint R&D and sales promotion, participation in the asset re-adjustment of local pharmaceutical enterprises, involvement in the re-structuring of the management framework of local small and medium-sized pharmaceutical enterprises, obtainment of import and export rights for drugs production and storage in the number of tax free zones along China's coastal area.

The seminar was jointly held by Beijing Medical Co. Ltd., Beijing Development Planning Commission, the Municipal Economic Commission, Science and Technology Commission, the Municipal Pharmaceuticals Supervising Bureau, the Municipal Public Health Bureau and Beijing Medical & Pharmaceutical Group.

GSE Showcases Global Experience In China

By Jian Rong

GSE Group, a leading European company specializing in the design and construction of industrial and service sector buildings, showcased its global integrated operation systems at the France-China 2001 Exhibition held on November 20-24 in Beijing.

"GSE has witnessed the exciting developments occurring in China. With the country's recent entry into WTO, an increasing number of foreign companies are expected to enter the Chinese market or expand their businesses. More and more local enterprises are expected to mushroom as well," said Michel Hugues, Vice President of GSE.

As a reputed Design and Build Turnkey Contractor, GSE has been designing and constructing "build-to-suit" facilities for industrial, logistical and service clients with the 'GSE method' (a benchmark for all professionals in the construction industry) worldwide for the past 25 years.

GSE has won plant construction contracts in China from foreign corporations such as Schneider, Alcatel, Lafarge Platres and Aventis Cropscience.

Recently, GSE has signed a new contract with Alstom Shanghai Transformer (AST) for the construction of a 10,000 square meters' factory located in Baoshan district. AST will manufacture Power Transformers from 35kV to 500 kV. The opening ceremony will take place next January with the factory coming into full operation from October 2002.

Overseas Enterprises May Join Construction of Gas Network

By Zhao Hongyi

China is inviting foreign enterprises to participate in its urban natural gas distribution networks construction and allows foreign investors to hold a majority of shares, according to Ms. Shou Jiahua, vice minister of China's Ministry of Land & Resources (MLR).

Ms. Shou made these remarks at the "Sino-Dutch Natural Gas Seminar and Matchmaking" held on November 27 in Beijing. The seminar was organized by the Royal Dutch Embassy in Beijing for the business delegation accompanying Ms. Annemarie Jorritsma-Lebbink, Dutch Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economic Affairs, on her official visit to China this week.

So far, China has opened the door to foreign enterprises, multinationals in particular, in terms of oil and gas exploration both on land and at sea, large-scale transmission pipelines construction and operation, refineries, as well as oil and gas retailing stations.

Nearly 20 Dutch geo-science and engineering companies presented their skills, technologies and expertise in oil and gas field-defining, drilling, related facilities manufacturing, transportation and distribution.

A number of agreements involving energy, finance, telecommunications, chemical and food industries were signed by Chinese enterprises and Dutch companies in the delegation on November 27 in Beijing.

By the end of last year, 69 oil exploration and refinery enterprises from 18 countries and regions had signed 143 contracts with Chinese corporations for sea oil exploration. 44 overseas companies are involved in land oil exploration at 48 sites. In the first ten months this year, ten applications have been forwarded to the ministry for oil and gas exploration with a total investment of over \$840 million.

Schedule Unveiled for Insurance Market Opens

By Xiao Rong

China unveiled last Thursday the schedule for the opening of the country's insurance industry after its entry to the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The schedule was released on the two-day WTO Insurance Summit held in Beijing by the industry watchdog China Insurance Regulatory Commission (CIRC).

"China's insurance industry will follow WTO rules and commitments to foreign insurers involving forms of establishment, geographic coverage, business scope and licenses.

"Foreign non-life insurers may set up their branches or joint ventures in China in the first year of China's entry to WTO, with their shares in under a ceiling of 51%," said Meng Zhaoyi, deputy director of CIRC.

Within two years after entry, wholly foreign-owned subsidiaries of non-life insurers will be permitted to operate with no restrictions, according to Meng.

"For a foreign life insurer, a joint venture with foreign equity of no more than 50% is permitted without any quantitative limits upon China's entry to WTO. Health insurance, group insurance and pension insurance can be provided by foreign life insurers to Chinese and foreigners within 3 years after entry," added Meng.

The insurance broker and reinsurance sectors will also be gradually opened to foreign investors within five years of China's accession to WTO.

"As for geographic coverage, foreign life

and non-life insurers will be permitted to provide services in Shanghai, Guangzhou, Dalian, Shenzhen and Foshan on China's accession.

"Within three years after China's entry however, foreign insurance companies will be permitted to provide services in all cities on the Chinese mainland," Meng stressed.



Domestic insurance industry has been ready for the coming of their foreign rivals
Photo by Zhuang Jian

Joint Venture to Beam English into Chinese Homes

By Jiang Zhong

Pearson plc, the international media and education company announced a joint venture with China Central Television (CCTV), the state owned television broadcaster, on November 19. The new Beijing-based company, Pearson CTV Media, will provide education and consumer content through television, broadband services and publishing for China's 350 million television households.

According to the agreement signed by the two sides, Pearson Broadband, the broadband television division of Pearson, will own 50% of the venture, with CTV Media Ltd, the Chinese partner in the joint venture and also a publicly traded multi-media and production united under CCTV, holding a 40% stake. Cyber Solutions Co. Ltd, a broadband and telecommunications services company based in Beijing, will hold the remaining 10%.

From March 2002, CCTV will provide Pearson CTV Media with unprecedented distribution access across its television network, which reaches more than 1 billion viewers every day.

In the deal, Pearson CTV Media will produce a range of television programming to introduce conversational English in an entertaining setting on CCTV channels. Four television series are planned with two already in development and the first to be broadcast on CCTV's Channel 10 (education and culture)

and Channel 5 (sports) from early next year.

Marjorie Scardino, Pearson's chief executive, said: "We are very pleased to have this opportunity to work with our partners to meet the huge demand for learning English that exists across China. We aim to make the learning process more accessible and more engaging than ever before. We will be helped in achieving that goal by the unique nature of our joint venture with CTV Media, which spans television, publishing and China's emerging broadband network."

All television programming will be supported with accompanying publishing from Pearson imprints including Longman, the world's leading English Language Training company. Longman will publish print-version, online and audio course materials, and the joint venture will pilot broadband services, including self-study English language courseware. The pilots will run in Beijing housing complexes recently installed with high bandwidth Internet connections.

"This alliance makes the most of new opportunities emerging in China and pairs us with a strong, entrepreneurial partner in CTV Media," said John Hollar, President of Pearson Broadband. "This enables us to help meet the huge demand in China for innovative, high quality education and entertainment across all media platforms."



Chinese students, particularly those in large cities, have been provided with health food in unified package. But much needs to be done for further improvement.
Photo by Zhuang Jian

Sushi and Chips for School Dinners

By Jiang Zhong

A health food producing joint venture set up by Dussmann Group from Germany and Yurong Food Company of Beijing was brought into operation last week. The joint venture will supply Beijing's primary and middle schools with health food products.

According to the joint venture initiative drafted, Dussmann Group will provide its Chinese partner with food processing and sterilizing equipment at the early stage of their cooperation.

Beijing Today has learnt that, till now, four Sino-foreign joint ventures have set foot in Beijing's health food market, with more due to enter this huge potential market after China's WTO entry.

Among the four, Dulimeng Food, the Sino-Japanese joint venture, has introduced Japanese meals to some schools. Though the meals were priced above 20 yuan, 3 to 4 times that of the Chinese meals, many students chose them.

With the improvement of living standards, many families of the students can afford the expensive foreign meals. They want more delicious and more nourishing meals despite the high price. More than ten schools in Beijing are ready to open their doors to these foreign meals.

The students' special demands have added momentum to the development of the market for foreign meals. Foreign food suppliers have to overcome certain hurdles before entering the schools however.

Gan Beilin, Director of the Municipal Education Commission Logistics Department, pointed out that more and more foreign-funded enterprises would appear on the Chinese market for school meals after China's entry to the World Trade Organization. However, all these enterprises will receive the municipal government's screening and investigation without exception. No foreign meals can enter the market without the prior consent of the government.

Elites Compete for Official Posts

By Chen Ying

Through public competition, thirty elites under the age of 45 have been appointed as Beijing Municipal senior officials or senior managers in a number of municipal enterprises. The average age of the appointees is 38.8-years-old. Twenty-two persons are under forty, and the youngest 33 years old.

There are nine PhDs, and fifteen masters degree holders among them, while twenty-six hold the senior technology titles. Females account for 30 percent of the total.

All those appointed will be on trial for a one-year period, and will be dismissed if they are found to be unsuitable for their positions.

The Beijing Municipal Government has held such public competitions on four occasions, and a total of 103 persons have been appointed to senior positions in this way since 1996. Most have won high praise.

The Municipal Government aims to appoint 20 percent of the senior officials through public competition within the next five years.

Graduates Face Pressure Finding Jobs

By Sun Ming

"I'm lucky because I needn't find a job this year," said Tian Lantu, a graduate of Tsinghua University who has already been recommended to study in a postgraduate program.

According to him, most of his classmates will also choose to resume their study instead of working.

"The employment situation for graduates in Beijing this year is worse than before, with supply exceeding demand," says Chen Jihe, director of the university's Employment Consult Center.

According to Chen, there are more graduates in Beijing this year than last year, a result of an increase in the number of university places several years ago. This year there are 30% more postgraduates

than last year.

"Even though some state-owned and multinational companies have held recruitment meetings in our universities since last week, they can only employ a fraction of the total number of graduates," said Chen.

Liu Chunli, a Renmin University postgraduate majoring in history, says if she could find a teaching position in a middle school, she'd be satisfied.

The situation is better for science graduates than humanities graduates. According to some analysts, the employment situation this year is worse than last year, but some science graduates especially those in computer and communications, as well as economics, are relatively unaffected.

Free WCs!

By Chen Ying

In order to make life easier for travelers and locals, Beijing Municipal Government has invested more than 40 million yuan to build or improve 200 public toilets along Chang'an Avenue and key business districts, according to Beijing Municipal Administration Committee.

In the past, it was difficult to find public toilets in these areas, particularly clean ones!

Eighty new toilets have already been opened to the public, and the remaining projects are due to be finished by the end of this year. All the toilets will reach the second-

degree level, in accordance with the Beijing Public Toilet Construction Standard.

Distinguished from the old ones, these toilets are modern and boast some useful facilities, such as baby changing areas and hand driers.

All the toilets will be equipped with facilities making them convenient for the handicapped and the aged to use, and they will all be free of charge.

Sanitation workers will be engaged in maintaining the cleanliness of the toilets. The cost of repairing each toilet is fifty thousand yuan at least every year.

Embezzler Gives Himself away after Polygraph Test

By Sun Ming

A young clerk who embezzled 27,000 yuan was sentenced to one year in prison on November 15 in Beijing, after failing a polygraph test.

On 24 November 1999, He Rifeng, a clerk at Beijing Ruixing Company, was sent by the company to Hubei province to collect a debt. But after gaining the money, he failed to hand it over.

According to the company manager, He Rifeng claimed that the money had been stolen by three bandits, and that he had been injured during the course of the robbery.

"I believed what he said at that time," the manager said. According to him, there was actually a cut on He's abdomen, although it didn't seem to be serious.

However the company came to doubt He's story, and this year

reported the case to the police.

According to judge Wang Yuan, He Rifeng admitted his crime at first, but in the subsequent trial, he denied his guilt, insisting that the money had been stolen and he had been injured in the robbery.

On 23 October this year, He Rifeng underwent a polygraph test. According to an expert who attended the test, he answered questions about the case for several hours, and it was eventually concluded that he was lying.

However, the results of the polygraph test can't be used directly as evidence in the case, according to Chinese law.

"Generally speaking, the accuracy rating of a polygraph test is about 90%," said Zhang. However the test did serve to corroborate the other evidence presented. "This is the main function of polygraph tests," said Zhang.



Photo by Wu Ning

Wu Zhongwei, a shoe-maker from a village in Hebei province, makes a living near Sanlitun (三里屯). In order to attract more customers, Wu has set up a sign describing the services he offers in English. (Sun Ming)



William and Frances attempt the 'Apple ritual' at their traditional Chinese wedding

Photo by Gloom

Foreign Couple Marries in Hutong

By Sun Ming

A traditional Chinese wedding took place Wednesday in a courtyard of a hutong near Beihai Park.

The wedding attracted the attention of many Beijingers, because the bride and groom were from America.

"Our dream comes true at last," declared William Plumber and Frances Lind. The couple arrived in Beijing several days ago. They say they were attracted by China a long time ago, influenced by one of their good friends, even though they have never been here before. "So we decided to hold our wedding here."

Six months ago, they sent a fax to China Youth Travel Service expressing their wish,

and said they hoped the wedding could be entirely along the lines of a Chinese traditional one. At the same time, they entrusted the company to make traditional Chinese wedding costumes for them.

The courtyard of an old Beijing couple was chosen as the site for the wedding. According to the residents, they were very happy when the company approached them, and have been very busy preparing for the wedding, decorated their room with paper lanterns and colored steamers.

The wedding followed the procedure of a traditional Chinese one. At first, four bearers carried the bride in a bridal sedan chair from the entrance of the hutong to the courtyard, and the groom wel-

comed her at the gate. Then the bride walked across the threshold and fire pan, and entered the room.

The new couple knelt down and kowtowed three times, for heaven and earth first, then for their relatives, and lastly for each other.

There were also some other traditional rites, such as the new couple telling their love story, drinking from nuptial cups by the bride and groom, and the apple ritual, in which the couple try to take a bite at the same time from an apple suspended between them. Usually the person holding the string lifts the apple at the crucial moment, in order that the couple 'accidentally' kiss.

"Follow your heart, never give up!"

By Su Wei

"It is the first time that I have seen a panda rest in a tree. And I am very happy to hear that the birds will have a huge enclosure," said Dr. Jane Goodall, the renowned animal behavioral scientist, when she visited the Beijing Zoo last Friday afternoon.

Dr. Goodall seldom visits zoos, though every year she spends more than 300 days promoting animal and environmental protection. She does not like zoos, for no matter how large it is, there is never enough space for the animals. This was her first visit to the Beijing Zoo, though she has been to Beijing three times in the past four years.

"The main reason for me to come to Beijing Zoo is that I have known that Beijing Zoo is not an amusement park. Instead it is aimed to educate and teach people caring for animals."

She said she was happy to see that Beijing Zoo has organized school students to take part in their 'One-day Beijing Zoo Keeper' activity. During the activity, students can clean the enclosures of animals such as pandas and snub-nosed monkeys, or they can work with the keepers to prepare the animal's meals.

"Animals have their own personalities. They can feel happy or sad," said she. She hopes that more people will keep in mind that human beings are not the only crea-



Dr. Jane Goodall, the renowned animal behavioral scientist, becomes the focus at the Beijing Zoo

Photo by Su Wei

tures on the planet.

When she first came to Beijing in 1998 to give a speech about environmental and animal protection programs, Dr. Goodall was surprised at the positive response she received. "I thought that the time is right for me to involve in China, though the country is big and environmental and animal protection will be a difficult task!"

She returned to Beijing in the following two years and launched the Roots and Shoots Program. With this program, children are learning to put their care for animals, the environment and the human community into practice, by

cleaning up yards and roads, planting trees and flowers, and designing enclosures for animals.

Dr. Goodall says she has been impressed with the Beijingers' efforts. She points out that the only difference in animal and environment protection between China and developed countries is that such activities in Europe and America have been going on for a long time, but in China it is new for most people.

"However there is no difference between the young people here and those in other countries. They care about it just as passionately!"

Farewell to Last Large Factory

By Sun Ming

Beijing Geological Instrument Factory, the last large factory on the East Third Ring Road, is to close its doors and will relocate to Beijing's outer suburbs.

The closing of the factory will mark the end of industrial land use along the East Third Ring Road.

Nine residential buildings with an area of about 250,000 square meters will be built here designed by some top German architectural firms, according to Li Xiaolin, president of the Linda Group, which has gained the rights to develop the region.

"The area is the face of our Beijing," he said, referring to the fact that visitors pass by as they come off the airport expressway onto the Third Ring Road. "So we will try our best to make it beautiful."

The area is highly suitable for living, because of its convenient transportation and facilities, and abundant greenery.

"Exploiting the most valuable land of a city will promote its development. The commercial value for each square meter of a city's golden region is obviously higher than its industrial value," says Yu Xuewen, a professor of the Architecture Institute of Tsinghua University.

International Medical Assistance Company Broadens Services in China

By Su Wei

International SOS, the world's largest medical assistance company, has recently introduced a program providing medical assistance and evacuation services to Chinese citizens.

National Medical Access Program specifically targets both individuals and companies whose employees work and travel in China.

"People in need of medical assistance, no matter where they are in China, only need call us and tell us his or her condition, and we will contact our coordinator doctor and suggest appropriate evacuation arrangements," says He Jingbin, Deputy General Manager of International SOS.

He said through this program, International SOS arranges not only the evacuation, but also contacts the hospitals and provides medical staff, ensuring that subscribers receive timely and effective treatment.

The new program goes beyond International SOS' existing C-Care Program, which is only available in Beijing, Nanjing, Tianjin and Guanzhou. The C-Care program was among the first in China to introduce the concept of private health care and 24 hour medical and pharmacy services.

Ming Tombs Reach International Standard

By Jiao Pei

A ceremony marking the awarding of ISO9001 Quality Management System and ISO14001 Environment Management System certificates to the Ming Tombs Special Zone was held at the Ding Tomb Square on November 15.

ISO, or International Organization for Standardization certificates have been accepted as the national standard by over 80 countries and regions since 1987. China adopted the system in 1994.

Management of the Ming Tombs have invested over 1 million yuan to qualify for the rating.

It is the first such tourism zone in Beijing to be awarded the two certificates, said Hao Xiaozhi, of the office of the Ming Tombs.

The awarding of the two certificates means the Ming Tombs have reached the internationally recognized standards in the fields of service quality and environmental management.

Honor Quest

University students enlist to defend nation

By Chen Ying

Our country needs you. It's time to enlist in the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in China. For the first time, Beijing has enacted a pilot program of incentive policies at three universities promoting student enlistment.

Previously if a Beijing high school student wanted to join up, he or she had to go direct to military college and enlist. But now they can go to college and enlist as a student.

A package of 12 Beijing government policy incentives encouraged more than 200 students from Beijing Polytechnic University, Beijing Agricultural College and University of Science and Technology Beijing to apply to enlist.

Incentives included:

* students attending full time university who volunteer can resume their education where they leave off within one year after demobilization;

* if students decide to join up, universities will refund their pre-paid annual tuition fee;

* after demobilization, students who graduate from their college will be first in line for postgraduate study;

* students who study for three-year diplomas can upgrade their education to a four-year diploma without taking any examination if they win certain excellence awards in the army.

Now students can join in the fight to defend the motherland. Some patriotic opinions follow:

Xie Lei, sophomore Beijing Agricultural College

There were two reasons I decided to enlist. The first was the



Beijing students take a different kind of examination

Photo by Shi Shaobo

good memory of my recent military training in my mind. Another was the attractive policies for demobilization.

Although college students are knowledgeable and of good character in most people's minds, we actually need to change something in our lives. For instance, most college students have only known the same old routine — classroom, bedroom and dining room — since primary school.

We rarely faced difficulties. Our lifestyle is too easy to properly mature in a certain sense. Although many college students are good at study, they lack self-restraint and self-discipline.

I'm lucky to have participated in military training when I was at high school and a freshman at my university. Although each

time was too brief, every one who participated experienced huge changes.

Fan Jianzhi, sophomore Beijing Polytechnic University

My father is an employee in the army. But he isn't a soldier. He often tells me it's daunting at first for a person to join the army, it's a pity for a person if he never enlists. He regrets he didn't enlist. He agreed with my decision quickly after I told him I wanted to enlist.

I always admired soldiers as I grew up in a military environment. If I can perform well enough in the army, I think I'll attend military college and become an officer. Otherwise I'll come back to campus and resume

model to a high-quality and high-efficiency model, from person-oriented to technology-oriented. Military equipment becomes more and more modern.

So there are higher requirements on a soldier's qualities. Although the number of soldiers whose education level surpasses high school has increased in recent years, there is still a great gap compared with developed countries. This gap will be bigger because universities have increased the admission rating and there are also many opportunities to get a job.

All these factors will influence the quality and constitution of the military. So it's important to encourage college students to enlist. This action will undoubtedly be useful to modify the soldiers' quality and strengthen the military.

Liu Zhongjie, officer

I enlisted when I was a college student. Through my personal experience, I have some suggestion to those students who want to enlist.

First, they should adjust their personal ambition to the country's benefit. Students' major mission is to study, while soldiers are on duty to protect the country. People need to be more devoted if they want to be a soldier.

Furthermore, students must be prepared to face difficulties. They should understand how special and honored the occupation is since they choose to be a soldier. Through challenges, day after day, year after year, soldiers can cultivate virtues — bravery, resolution, optimism and so on. It's also a valuable experience in one's life.

SOUND BITES

"The government's policy was not only a manifestation of irrationality, but nothing short of insanity. We are seeking to confront a state-sanctioned programme which amounts to a conscious choice that results in thousands of predictable, yet avoidable, deaths of children. When you're dealing with a new and potent drug like Nevirapine, you have to adopt a cautious approach. We do not know what the long-term effects are."

— Treatment Action Campaign's barrister Gilbert Marcus after the South African government was accused in court of sacrificing the lives of tens of thousands of babies by its policy of refusing to make anti-Aids drugs widely available to pregnant women.

"I urge you all to forge a truly historic compromise that holds out a better future for your torn country and its people. The international community is prepared to make this great effort."

— German foreign minister Joschka Fischer at the UN-sponsored peace talks between Afghan factions in Bonn Tuesday.

"The increased provisions reflected the severe outlook in the second half of the year. The write-offs might not be enough. This does not mean that the problem has been resolved, because the banks are not only dealing with bad loans from the past but with loans that are becoming non-performing."

— Shoji Mori, commissioner of the Financial Services Agency explaining why major Japanese banks will cut thousands more jobs and write off trillions of yen in bad loans.

By Chen Ying

北京青年报
BEIJING TODAY
今日北京

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The results of a recently released one-year survey on the sexual transmission of HIV raise some important questions on the reasons for its increase. The survey was conducted by the Sexual Sociology Institute of People's University, from August 1999 to August 2000.

Sex and the Spread of AIDS in China

The number of HIV and AIDS patients in China continues to increase. Over the past three quarters, 5,616 new HIV infections have been reported, compared with a total of 5,201 last year. Meanwhile, 328 patients have developed AIDS, compared with 233 last year.

According to the Ministry of Public Health, almost 67% of HIV infections in China are a result of intravenous drug injections using non-sterile syringes. The number of drug addicts continues to rise, especially in large and medium-sized cities.

Meanwhile, many popular medical magazines and newspapers are citing sex as the main source for HIV/AIDS transmission, because the rate of HIV infections transmitted through sexual intercourse increased last year.

Male management staff more at risk from HIV infection

The likelihood of male management staff such as factory directors etc. to employ the service of prostitutes is ten times that of ordinary workers and twenty two times that of farmers.

Furthermore, men in this category are more likely to have had multiple sexual partners than ordinary workers and farmers.

Managers, factory bosses may have more opportunities to meet prostitutes, as service from prostitutes is sometimes proffered as an incentive to establish or maintain business relationships.

Furthermore, management staff may have a comparatively wide connection with all kinds of people.

For example, they may be more likely to have sexual affairs with their female secretaries and others who may be allured by the possibility of gaining social influence or some sort of personal benefit from them.

On the other hand, some may take advantage of their positions to force their female employees or colleagues to have sex with them.

Young men most likely to frequent brothels

The survey reveals that one out of eight men below the age of 35 have visited a brothel, while for the 25 to 29 age group, the figure is one out of six.

This might be due, at least in part, to the natural rebelliousness of the young. Young men are perhaps more likely to go against traditional teachings and moral values.

As sex is such a taboo subject for many, having sex with a prostitute is an obvious way of declaring one's unwillingness to conform.

Meanwhile, they are likely to ignore the potential danger of HIV/AIDS, taking the attitude of "it couldn't happen to me".

Sex services increasing rapidly

Among the men surveyed who admitted to having had sex with prostitutes (6%), 39% had done so in the previous three months, 50% within six months 72% within the last year and 89% within five years.

A combination of factors, including an increasing number of employment opportunities in many large and medium sized cities, and high levels of unemployment in some areas, due to the closure of local industries and staff lay-offs, has resulted in an influx of job seekers to many cities.

A number of young women find their lack of education and experience a barrier to gaining employment, and resort to prostitution. Meanwhile, some men see employing the services of prostitutes as being a sign of having "made it", a prerequisite of the successful businessman.

Low rate of promiscuity

Of those surveyed between the age of 20 and 64, only 13% admit to having had more than one sexual partner in their life. Among those who have, 74% say they have had two or three sexual partners, and 86% six or fewer.

This provides a clue as to why there are relatively few sexual transmitted HIV cases in China. There are few opportunities for the sexual transmission of a disease in a society where there is relatively little promiscuity.

Chinese women contribute to slowing the spread of HIV/AIDS

Fewer than 6% of the women surveyed admitted to having more than one sexual partner in their life. Given this figure, even if all male HIV carriers passed on the virus to their female partners, the rate of its spread would still be minimal.

Awareness of self-protection

15% of those surveyed use condoms when having sex with their spouse, 20% use condoms with long term (more than six months) partners, followed by 23% for short term (three months to six months) partners. In contrast, 66% of those who said they had sex with prostitutes used condoms.

This suggests that most Chinese understand that sex with their spouse is the safest, while sex with prostitutes is the most risky.

As a result, HIV transmission through sexual intercourse has not increased in step with the development of the sex industry.

Meanwhile, it also suggests that if everyone used condoms when they had sex outside marriage, HIV transmission through sexual intercourses would not be an issue.

(By Su Wei)

Weekly Survey

Hi-tech products not only the flavor for youth

Sources from CCID.Net shows 68% of those who have purchased laptops this year are aged between 18 and 36, compared with 76% last year, suggesting that more middle-aged and older people are using laptops.

Meanwhile, 24% of commercial PC consumers regard functions as the most influential factor when they make a purchase, followed by after-sales-service (20%) and brand reputation (18%).

This indicates that competition in the IT market is moving from products and technology toward services and enterprise structures.

With a shrinking in profits for IT products predicted, simple price competition has become less effective.

Taking promotions made by PC manufactures this year as an example, they have not been limited to traditional measures such as reducing prices, but also seek to exploit cultural influence and personality influence.

University students or thieves?

Beijing University Student Service Center has revealed that about 17% of juvenile delinquents are university students, and of these, 70% have committed some form of larceny.

Meanwhile, juvenile delinquents account for 70-80% of the criminals in China. Back in 1965, 33% of all criminal acts in China were committed by juveniles, 1% of whom were university students.

During the Cultural Revolution, the incidence of juvenile delinquency rose significantly, accounting for 60% of criminal acts all over the country.

Although university students are commonly assumed to have a bright future and capable of distinguishing wrong from right, it certainly does not mean that they are incapable of committing crimes.

What does beauty mean to Chinese women?

P&G have recently conducted a survey among Chinese women aged between 18 and 45, to determine their idea of the meaning of beauty.

The survey found that having a lofty aspiration and resolve as an entrepreneur was considered as beautiful as having an elegant and graceful bearing.

It shows that women do not only rely on good looks, but also on their strength to succeed in their career.

Furthermore, it reflects that the powerful women is not only one who has a successful career, but also displays the character of traditional Chinese women, that is being tender and full of affection.

Almost half of the surveyed say big eyes and high noses are the most important factor of being a beauty.

In contrast, the standard of beautiful for Chinese people is different to that of Westerners. Full forehead, round lips and long thin jaw are the considered as the beauty standard in western countries.

Quick love for marriage

It seems that young people are falling in love faster these days. According to Chinese Marriage Quality, 23% of young couples get married within half a year of meeting each other, 24% get married within half to one year, and 18% and 14% between one to one and a half and one and a half to two years respectively.

Furthermore, among young married couples, 26% say their love is less romantic than before they married, while 4% say it is more romantic.

Young people tend to be under greater pressure now than in the past, and it may be that some concentrate on their study or work in order to be more competitive, at the expense of their love.

However, it is argued that a whirlwind marriage is not necessarily a bad thing if the young couple are matched well.

More efforts needed in student psychological education

Among 59 Beijing universities, only half have established psychological consulting institutes, with a total of no more than 100 researchers. That is, there is only one psychological consulting teacher for every 10, 000 students.

It may be due to the long neglect of the education of such specialized teachers. Furthermore, psychology majors may be unwilling to work in a university institute, as they can earn more in a large hospital.

Recently, Research on Psychological Condition of Capital University Students disclosed that 55% of students suffer from psychological pressure, while only 4% have sought help in the way of university psychological consulting.

It suggests that most university students still consider it a weakness to admit they have some psychological problems, and equate psychological problems with mental disease.

(By Su Wei)

A Life Free of Violence

On the status of women suffering violence in China

★ In 1999, the UN General Assembly adopted November 25 as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Women and men in over 100 countries now hold public events and campaigns beginning on that day and culminating on December 10, Human Rights Day.

★ In April this year, an article on preventing domestic violence was included in the new Marriage Law of China, providing a legal basis for action against domestic violence.



The 28-year-old woman's hands were cut off by her husband following a domestic dispute about money



Photos by Hu Jie

By Ivy Zhang

On November 26, the All-China Women's Federation convened a media meeting commemorating the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. More than 100 people from international, national and local communities participated. This is the first time such a large-scale activity of this nature has been convened at state level in China.

It was not until the early 1990s that the term "domestic violence" started to appear in the Chinese media. Before then, all the beating, scolding and other injuries among family members were considered to be household affairs. Husbands beating their wives was seen as normal, understandable, forgivable and manageable within families.

Brutality between husband and wife

There are few cases in which men are abused by their spouse. Women are usually the victims in domestic violence.

On March 11, 2000 in Chongqing, Sichuan province, 28 year-old Yang Ling, owner of a small clothing store, quarrelled with her husband, Shui Wenjin, a Chinese language teacher at a primary

school, over a 2,000 yuan deposit on their way home in the afternoon. That night, the couple resumed the quarrel. Shui dragged his wife into kitchen and cut off both her hands at the wrists with a kitchen knife. Shui then called the police and rushed Yang to the hospital.

Hu Jie, photographer for "Chongqing Economic Daily" still remembers the scene he witnessed in the hospital. "Yang Ling kept crying out in her bed, 'Mom, I'm scared and cold'".

On June 16, 2000, Shui was sentenced to 11 years in prison. "This is a severe and typical domestic violence case. It's so brutal." Yu Guifang, the Deputy President of Chongqing Women's Federation, said when visiting Yang in hospital, "It's a criminal case, not just a household conflict."

Elderly women abused by their children

Compared with young women, elderly women in the family tend to be more dependent due to their limited financial sources. They are easily exposed to maltreatment from their children and husbands, both physically and mentally. In terms of domestic violence, most of them choose to tolerate it and keep quiet.

The Maple Women's Psychological Counseling Center in Beijing, a small non-government organization, opened the first Women's Hotline in China in September 1992 and began to operate an Aging Women's Hotline in 1998 to meet the increasing needs of elderly women, helping them to release pressure, cope with psychological crises and rebuild their self-esteem.

In March this year, the center received a call from a lady in her 60's. Her husband died one year ago and six months ago, she remarried, to a retired military officer in his 70's. Since stepping into the new family, she received the cold shoulder from the stepchildren who suspect that she married the old man just for money and property. They showed no respect to the lady and often humiliated her, calling her "bitch" or "shameless woman". The old man, at the instigation of the children, beat her from time to time, and finally asked for a divorce.

"Elderly women are vulnerable to maltreatment or violence from their children, especially if they remarry," Zhai Yan, a psychological counselor from Maple Center noted, "They usually care too much about their 'face' and can do nothing but tolerate the physi-

cal and mental suffering."

First sexual harassment case in China

Sexual harassment is a violence issue that occurs in the workplace. According to the Maple Women's Psychological Counseling Center in Beijing, 4% to 5% of nearly 40 calls they receive are related to sexual harassment.

On November 20, Lianhu District People's Court in Xi'an, capital of Northwest China's Shaanxi Province, opened a public trial on the country's first sexual harassment case.

The plaintiff Ms. Tong, claims the general manager of her company has been sexually harassing her since 1994. She alleges that the manager has been trying to exchange sexual favors for promotion. When she refused, he picked on her work and cut her salary and bonuses, Tong says.

Most sexual harassment victims in China have to bear their suffering in silence. Tong's lawyer was not optimistic about the case's outcome, because China has no laws concerning sexual harassment. However, as Tong says, "Someone must stand up and bring the matter to the public's attention".



White Ribbon Flutters



Chen Lanyan, Gender Advisor to UNIFEM in Northeast Asia

Photo by Qiu Binbin

By Ivy Zhang

In 1991, a male student from a polytech college in Canada shot 14 female students and teachers with a machine gun. In the wake of this incident, women and men stood up together in a campaign using a white ribbon as a symbol of ending male violence against women.

On Nov. 26, Beijing Today interviewed Ms. Chen Lanyan, United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) Gender Advisor in Northeast Asia, on the global issue of women's rights. Below are excerpts from the interview.

Beijing Today: What has UNIFEM done to promote women's human rights across the world?

Chen: In 1999, UNIFEM launched campaigns on the issue of violence against women with several other UN agencies. The campaigns started with the center place Latin America where cultures are traditionally male-dominated. From Latin America, we moved to Asia. There are different issues in Asia, for instance, the "honor killing" that occurs in some Muslim countries, and bride killing in India. All of these are different forms of violence against women.

BT: A nationwide survey conducted by China Academy of Social Sciences revealed that 30% of women in China suffer domestic violence. How about the world as a whole?

Chen: There are many ways of interpreting a survey. We have to look at it in terms of who is in the survey. In the countryside, the incidence would be even higher. As for the world, the rate varies from country to country. For instance, in Latin America, the rate is very high, 60% to 70% while in North America, it could be much lower.

BT: So can we say it's a global issue?

Chen: Oh, yes, definitely. But it's connected with other key issues like poverty, hunger, and the spread of HIV/AIDS. In some societies, if a woman contracts AIDS, she's likely to be abandoned, kicked out her workplace or home. So all these kinds of violence can occur. At the same time, in societies where the status of women is very low, there tends to be more violence against them.

There are many different types of violence: violence in the home, community and society, violence perpetrated by the state, and violence against non-combatants in war. In 1999, the international war crimes tribunal recognized rape as a war crime.

So we're not just looking at one particular kind of violence, although we started with domestic violence.

BT: What should the society do to prevent violence against women?

Chen: In the west, many countries have launched shelters for victims of violence, and society needs to be more gender sensitive and fully recognize women's rights. Also, it requires teamwork to prevent and eliminate violence against women. Women's groups should work with men, to ensure that men look at how they treat women.

BT: How can we bridge the gap between the marriage law as it is stated, and its actual implementation, in terms of domestic violence in China?

Chen: The issue of domestic violence is dealt with specifically in the new marriage law adopted by the National People's Congress in April 2001. However, the procedure to implement the marriage law needs to be worked out. This year, UNIFEM trust fund supports a project to be administered by the All-China Women's Federation. Four pilot projects will be set up in Liaoning Jiangxi, Shaanxi and Hubei provinces. I think there are two important goals. One is to establish a working network between the Women's Federation and relevant departments such as police, courts, prosecutors and so on. This is a process of institutionalization. It'll also address the question that the marriage law doesn't provide a procedure on how to implement the marriage law and how to hold perpetrators of domestic violence accountable. The second part is to develop handbook for police and judges. If it proves effective and is recognized by the central government, the handbook will be distributed widely at a grass-roots level and will hopefully become very helpful in terms of detailing how to resolve domestic violence cases with the police.



Two months after they first met, Gao & Yuan married in Oct. 1998

Lawyer Goes on Trial for Murdering Wife



Gao faces the court
Photos by Gao Zhihai

By Su Wei

A former lawyer stood in court in Beijing on Tuesday as a defendant in a murder trial. Gao Zhenyu is charged with brutally killing his wife, Yuan Di one morning in August this year. In his defense, Gao told the court that if his wife had treated his mother a little better, if she had not tried to restrict him from making friends, and if she had not prevented him from seeing his child from his previous marriage, he would not have resorted to killing her.

All those stated family problems are very common among families of divorcees, according to a social analyst. Problems ranging from society, work, family and friends may bring pressures but few people respond in such a drastic manner.

Husband says wife's suspicious mind led to tragedy

Gao said the first time he conflicted with his wife was in the Spring Festival of 1999 when his wife received a call from his former girl friend. His wife then suspected that Gao must be in-

involved in a relationship with some women, and tried constantly to find out who called him.

His wife also locked Gao at home and kept his money, ID card as well as his lawyer certificate. Consequently, Gao could not go to work and was threatened with the loss of his job. Although Gao wanted a divorce, he says he was frightened of her violent temper.

One of Gao's colleagues, a witness at the trial said Gao was very clear, but was very cowardly. In contrast, his wife was very hot tempered. Gao was so frightened that he even dared not to sit beside another woman to have dinner.

Gao killed his wife without any mercy

Gao says the reason he killed his wife was to escape from the mental suffering she caused him. On the night of August 2nd, they went to a western restaurant for dinner, the place where they first got to know each other. Gao says he still hoped they could have a better ending for their marriage. Even when they returned home, Gao still hesitated about wheth-

er or not to kill her.

However the following morning, Gao struck her on the back of her head with a dumbbell and covered her nose to make certain that she was dead. He then dismembered the body and boiled it so that the blood would not be discovered.

That afternoon, Gao drove his car, with his wife's remains in the trunk, to attend a hearing at the Beijing First People's Court. At about half past three, he drove the car from the court and disposed of the body.

Confessing his crime

On the night of August 3rd, Gao called his wife's father and told him she was missing. He said he was tortured by the suffering of his wife's family and he could not live with the pressure of their doubts, so he decided to confess his crime.

During the hearing, Gao was very calm as he told how he had killed his wife and described how he had been unable to control himself. At the same time, he seemed to find it very easy to call his wife his "ai ren" (sweetheart).

More Precious

By Michael Reynolds

While most foreigners who have spent any time in China are familiar with Beijing Opera, few know about the much older form of kunqu. Originating in the Song Dynasty (960 - 1279 A.D.), the latter is an obscure jewel among China's myriad cultural relics. Differing in its choreography and musical language, these dramas face an uncertain future when only a few theaters in Beijing hold dismal crowds of foreign tourists. Furthermore, the talent pool of trained thespians consists of just a dozen or more people.

Thirty-four year old actor, director and teacher Fang Tong, from Beijing, is one of the remaining few that is dedicated to a life on stage. Since the kunqu performers have become fewer and fewer, Fang Tong is sometimes called jokingly "more precious than panda".

An Older Student

Kunqu is known for its colorful wardrobes, simple stage decoration, impressive acrobatics and high-pitched singing. Actors rely on miming as well as bold gestures and facial expressions to tell stories of love and war. Their motions are synchronized to the sporadic rhythm of stage-side musicians playing traditional Chinese instruments such as drums, cymbals, bells, and flutes. "Actors who want to perform kunqu must begin studying at a very young age," says Fang Tong, "yet, I began at 19... which is rather old." As a child he loved watching Cultural Revolution Operas on television, as well as all kinds of theater performances. In 1986, "I spotted a call for auditions in the newspaper to study at Beijing's North Kunqu Opera Theater," Fang Tong recalls. During the audition the instructors paid special attention to Fang Tong's singing ability. "I was told, 'you have a good voice... you could learn to act.'" Tall, lanky and full of confidence, Fang Tong began his three harsh years of study.

Perhaps the intense studies Fang Tong and his classmates underwent can be most easily understood by watching Chen Kaige's famous film about Beijing Opera, *Farewell my Concubine*. In the film, students that made even minor mistakes were made to endure serious punishments at the hands of their teachers.

"In fact," interjects Fang Tong, "the conditions portrayed in that film can't be considered very harsh. The environment I studied in made me really nervous. Our teachers would beat us with a wooden stick when we made mistakes." Today, Fang Tong is rather soft-spoken about his days as a student and says that he has no "bad memories about that time".

In 1989, Fang Tong and his classmates became the last group of students to graduate from the North Kunqu Opera Theater. During their three years together, the group created long-lasting bonds of friendship. "There were about forty-five students and now there are only about fifteen who perform kunqu," says Fang Tong. "Many have quit theater altogether



Than Pandas

ing, you must go on because the moment is already gone and you can never go back to it... art isn't straightforward, it's always changing and developing."

Indeed, Fang Tong's broad interests also include many kinds of art. On a recent trip to France and Holland, he had the chance to further pursue his hobby of photography and also visit the Louvre.

An Open Future

One day in 1996, Fang Tong met a Dutch woman at the North Kunqu Opera Theater. Anna-Marie "was doing research on opera management at my work unit when we met. She eventually became my girlfriend and we moved in together." In between teaching and spending time with his girlfriend, Fang Tong is often at his former school and stomping ground.

Regarding the future of kunqu, Fang Tong acknowledges many problems that exist are difficult to solve. "It's not a question of money... the government gives money to conserve this art form. There may be many reasons for the decline of traditional Chinese kunqu. The biggest problem, I feel, is with theater management," laments Fang. He insists that it's a much bigger problem than most people imagine and it's not confined to just traditional operas. "The problem of management in China includes all forms of theater," he adds. "It's really not in a good state right now and they need to change their ways".

Furthermore, incredible changes that China made in the last century may have left kunqu behind. "The operas that people are seeing in Beijing now are extracts from pieces that were originally several hours long," says Fang Tong. "The Peony Pavilion" a famous example of kunqu, could be 18 hours long with 50 extracts, if performed in its entirety.

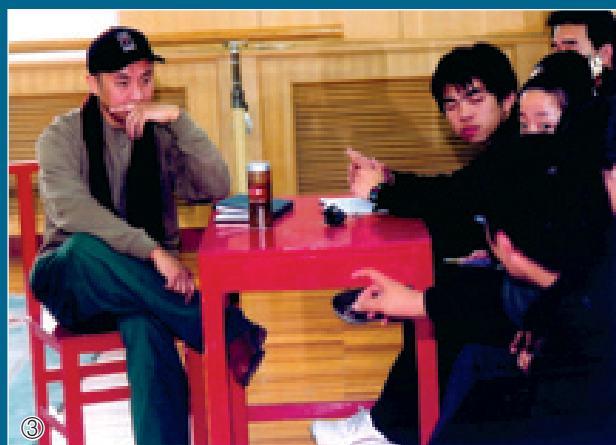
"The kind of performances that cater to foreigners, with many battles and so forth [such as the Monkey King], are actually light years away from real kunqu. I think only performing these kinds of extracts is very bad," claims Fang. In these cases, "the performances are really just an introduction to Chinese opera."

However, Fang Tong feels that showing the beautiful aspects of China's culture to foreigners is important and exciting. "You know, I think I'm a good actor and if the opportunity arose, I would like to perform kunqu again. I worry about [the future of] kunqu. It has been such a large part of my life, but it has also made me very sad."

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① At the gate of the North Kunqu Opera Theater, where he has been for 15 years

② Sitting among the props of the North Kunqu Opera Theater

③ Instructing students at the Academy of Chinese Traditional Opera

④ Fang Tong (R) in the drama *Force of Habit*

⑤ Fang Tong in kunqu costume
Photos by Michael Reynolds / Li Yan

er while some have gone abroad." Yet, those that remain have kept close contact with each other and many of them live in dormitories of their former school. "I still spend much of my time there," Fang Tong adds. Having been established in 1958, "it no longer has the ability to operate as a school," he quietly admits. The guild still exists but it now directs new students to the Beijing Opera School.

A Road of My Own

Today Fang Tong's experiences and interests lie not just with kunqu, but with modern acting

and directing as well. Three weeks ago he played an animal trainer in *Force of Habit* by the Austrian playwright, Thomas Bernhard, at the China Children's Theater. "I actually haven't performed in any kunqu operas in the past four years," Fang Tong frankly states.

Upon graduation in 1989, Fang Tong went to work performing kunqu with the North Kunqu Opera Theater until 1997. During that time he discovered that there were "very few opportunities to act in kunqu operas". Fang continues, "I really felt that for the older and more experienced ac-

tors, there was a kind of competition among them that had nothing to do with ability. Perhaps that's true for all the arts. In any case, I decided to go my own road."

In 1997 Fang Tong was enrolled in the Academy of Chinese Traditional Opera to study theater direction. Looking to broaden his horizons, Fang graduated in July of this year and began teaching acting and directing there. "I'm not a permanent instructor there so I'm also highly involved directing at the North Kunqu Opera Theater," he explains.

Most of Fang Tong's students are from other parts of China and have come to Beijing at the very young age of sixteen or seventeen. "I hope to create an environment for my students that is much more relaxing than the one that I studied under," explains Fang Tong. "An actor should relax himself when performing." Yet, his students deeply respect him and he never needs to raise his voice in order to be heard. Offering bits of wisdom and experience to them, Fang Tong continued, "if you feel that you have just made a mistake when you are perform-

On the Road to Shangri-La

By Shi Xinyu

This is a journal of a four-year-long adventure in southwest China, it is an album of pictures of the unique ecology of the Hengduan Mountains, and it is a story about how a man finds Shangri-La in his heart and gains the utmost spiritual freedom in real life. All this is contained in Gai Mingsheng's book *On the Road - A Photographer's Travel Journal in the Hengduan Mountains*, published by Shanghai Literature Publishing House in April 2001.

In 1996, author Gai Mingsheng, a middle-

aged professional photographer, was misguided to Lugu Lake in Yunnan province after originally intending to go to Guangxi autonomous region to cure a severe spinal injury from an accident several years ago on the west shore of the Black Sea. At Lugu Lake, the mysterious folk culture of the Mosuo people (who still live in a matriarchal society) and the magnificent natural scenery both captured his heart. The passion for exploring this magical world, like a living fossil, further drove Gai Mingsheng to begin a journey into the Heng-

duan Mountains.

With a frail spine bearing a bag full of cameras, Gai set out in search for the Shangri-La in his heart throughout the whole Hengduan Mountain area, taking pictures at every moment he was moved or amazed, as well as writing down all the feelings he experienced. Finally he found his Shangri-La and gave birth to this book. "Never to neglect the longing for beautiful things in life, and never to stop discovering are the themes of my book and my life," Gai concludes.

May 28th, 1996, Love Songs on the Lake

Insomnia has been torturing me over the last two days and my poor health prevents me from making the journey to Guangxi Autonomous Region, which I had scheduled for a long time. Though the Tian family has been offering me generous hospitality, as before, still I cannot help feeling heavy-



Mosuo girls dancing on Goddess Gemu Mountains

hearted and gloomy. But this morning, Father Tian gave me a good suggestion and I agreed at once.

Wen Ji, the son of the family, and Sa Da, a young man in the village, slung a pair of long oars across their shoulders and prepared to row me to the remote Hot-spring Village for recuperating.

In a Zhu-Cao boat (猪槽船) made from a whole round log, I was first rowed to the Lige Peninsula on the west bank of Lugu Lake (泸沽湖).

Silver luster gleamed brilliantly on the calm and limpid Lugu Lake. Cheerful songs from girls

in dimly seen boats brightly resounded on the lake. They were singing: "We reserve you a seat on the hillside, Xie Nami (the goddess of Lugu Lake) leaves you a boat on the lake, see the amorous Goddess Gemu, she is offering you her soft hand..." In legend, Gemu is a love goddess who has numerous A-Xiao (the way Mosuo People call male lovers), and our boat was heading in the direction of the Goddess Gemu Mountain (格姆女神山).

Excited by the songs, Sa Da hinted through his eyes and then responded in singing: "The luck leads us together tonight, but I will leave when the cock crows the sun rise. We spend evenings together but revert to strangers in the day light."

Their high spirits swept away all my pains and worries. I tried to hold my body up but the sudden pain made my arms lose control and almost overturned the little Zhu-Cao Boat. Fortunately Weng Ji's quick reaction saved us. Just at that time, I noticed that the log-shaped wooden boat is operated by the helmsman in the front while a man rows at the back.

Two hours later our boat slipped into gulf of Lige Peninsula (里格半岛), which looks like a turtle's head coming out of the lake while its neck connects the Goddess Gemu Mountain on land. Dwellings made from tree fern are built halfway around the peninsula while several unknown trees and a Ma Ni Pile (玛尼堆) stand. Some white lotus floating in the gulf, a woman with head-bindings and frilled skirt stood in a Zhu-Cao boat fishing for water grass as food for the pigs at home; three kids joyfully played around her. The woman greeted us and made way for our boat to berth. Then we landed at Lugu Lake in Yunnan province.



Photo by Cui Jun



Rope bridge on Dulong River (独龙江)

June 7th, 1996 Ceremony of Cremation and Soul Departing

Excited by the coming magical ceremony of cremation and soul departing, I didn't sleep a wink the whole night. After the cock crowed for the third time in the early morning, I hastened to Jia Ze's home in darkness. The solemn ceremonies of horse driving and placing the body in the coffin were taking place there. Da Ba (the wizard) hung a hen by the side of the sedan-shaped coffin and exhorted Na Kacier (the dead man) to enjoy the accompaniment of this new friend and not to miss home. I headed to the crematory site without waiting for the ceremony to end. On the way to the crematory site, Da-Zhou-Ba, a kind of green flag that hangs on white bamboo poles, lay scattered across the whole mountain-side; Ji-Lu-Ji-Ba, some colored flags with inscriptions, could also be seen here and there along the road. The crematory site was at the corner of the mountain by the side of Jiminu River (吉米奴河). A nine-leveled wooden crematory frame had been built in a clearing, the location of which had just been decided yesterday by the Da Ba depending on the dead man's birth time and the direction of the house he had lived in.

Lamas in colored gowns and black peaked caps had been at the crematory site for a long time. Many sacrifices and gifts for Na Kacier to take back to the home of the soul were put on the altar.

A funereal stream of people moved in close accompaniment to the sounds of fire cracks. Headed by flag-holding children and sheepskin-clad warriors, the coffin was carried by eight strong men in the middle, and was fol-



Young men with leather bags

lowed by an endless stream of people at the rear. The unexpectedly huge crowd ruined my original plans for taking photos, so I climbed the peak of the mountain-side and occupied a high point in order to catch some unusual moments. Coffin carriers and masked fire-lighting men were busily unloading the coffin around me. The sheepskin-coated warriors stood still by the sides of the coffin with broadswords, bows and arrows in hands, with fires burning near their feet.

When I had just fixed my camera on them, an old man who is a relative to Na Kacier rushed to me, and knocked my tripod over in an attempt to snatch the camera. While all the other people were amazed by this sudden attack, Jia Ze jumped out, held the old man tightly and said something into his ear. Then the old man waved his hand and disappeared.

At that time, two Lamas responsible for burning cut the coffin open, threw the body wrapped in white cloth into the wood crematory frame and the cremation ceremony began. All the people knelt down at once and loud crying burst out. This is the first time people cried in the one-week-long funereal period. Before the Lamas lit the fire, people jumped

around the flames to avoid being embodied by evil ghosts.

After dancing around the wormwood people dispersed, leaving just the Lamas. A dead quiet fell instantaneously; the crematory site was covered with a scary, mysterious and grave atmosphere. The presiding Lama turned to me and asked if I was afraid of being embodied by some evil ghosts. Of course, I am afraid. But how could I give up such a rare chance? So I shook my head firmly. Then the Lama loudly chanted, lighting the fire to burn the body. A column of smoke flew into the sky just as if a straight beam of light was sending Na Kacier's soul to heaven. I shot and shot from every possible angle. It was truly amazing.



Gao Turu, a Dong Ba God of Warriors

Extract from "On the Road - A Photographer's Travel Journal in the Hengduan Mountains"
Translated by Shi Xinyu

Photos by Gai Mingsheng



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Tango without The Thorns

By Alastair Morrison

Argentina's Tango Metropolis Dance Troupe gave Beijing audiences their second taste of tango this year, at the Minorities' Cultural Palace on November 23 and 24.

Tango Metropolis traces the history of tango over a hundred years combining can-dombe, classic tango, milonga, waltz and contemporary tango. Hailed as a bold, original presentation of the tango with new music and choreography, the show should have been the perfect arousal for a foreign audience to experience the moves and pas-sions of the dance.

The story aims at animating marginal-ized, sultry, and nocturnal characters into a series of conflicts and encounters. Scenes ranging from racetrack to roadside lacked conviction however.

The dancers displayed competent mas-

tery of technique and glided in and out of each other's legs elegantly enough, but tan-go should surely arouse and deflate desire. Even when the two stars of the show, Pilar Alvarez and Claudio Hoffmann met, any hint of emotional torment, physical domi-nance or violent obscenity failed to crackle off their bodies. The audience should have been shifting uneasily in their seats, loos-ening collars and nervously crossing their legs.

Once the show comfortably came to a close, all a composed public could man-age was a polite applause, as if at a cricket match. This still did not dampen at least two comebacks and a misplaced drum solo finale.

Tango Metropolis forgot to bring the fuel, let alone light any fires.

Photo by Liu Ping



Can Romance Save New Year Films?

By Zhu Lin

Coincidentally, next Valentine's Day falls over the Spring Festival period. Grabbing this coincidence as an opportunity to earn a fortune, the Forbidden City & Trinity Pic-tures Co. Ltd. are presenting *Falling in Love at First Sight*, a romantic comedy, as a New Year Film (similar to a Christmas Film in the West) in February next year.

Director Xia Gang is confident about the movie, "I believe it will do well at the box-of-fice," he assured. In the story, Laobu, a young man meets Jiujiu at a bar and falls for her at first sight. Jiujiu disappears afterwards, and Laobu starts to search for her. "I must find her," is the phrase expressing Laodu's deter-mination that ends the film.

In 1998, Feng Xiaogang, director of *Sigh*, presented his first New Year Film *Side A and Side B*, which unwittingly set the stan-dard for New Year Films. Ever since then, almost every New Year Film has been a far-cical comedy, which no longer satisfies the audience.

Early this year, the total box-office tak-ings of the five New Year Films amounted to 3, 200, 000 yuan, including Zhang Yimou's *Happy Time*. This was only one third of last year's New Year Film, *Endless*, which earned 9,800,000 yuan. "Their style and content are so similar that they look like twins," criticized Fang Zheng, journalist in Guangzhou's South Daily.

The directors have noticed the change in public taste, so they have switched to the ro-mantic film genre. But Xia Gang didn't have enough time to perfect his *Falling in Love at First Sight* since the last shot was wrapped up on November 22 in Beijing, "The adver-tising company kept pushing me to finish the film before this month, so I had to hurry up," he said. With a film pieced together under pressure of time and duty to save New Year Films, only doubt and skepticism re-main to greet it.



Picture from *Falling in Love at First Sight*

Folk Music Calls for Change in Venue

By Zhu Lin

Original folk musicians from all around China will meet on stage in Beijing each month from January to October next year at the Beijing Concert Hall. Despite the high cultural value of the music, usually the box-of-fice record of such performances is dis-appointing. "We must think carefully about how to carry out such a project," suggested Dr. He Yunfeng, expert in Chinese folk music from China Central Conservatory, "I think the musicians should step out of the concert hall."

He has his own reason to say this. Numerous performances of folk music from all over the world have turned up on Beijing stages over recent years. This has already become a sign of Beijing's cultural prosperity, but un-

fortunately, the cultural significance behind the performances has barely been passed on to the public. Usually the folk musicians just come and go with box-office takings of less than 50%.

If upcoming Chinese folk music is treated in the same way, its cultural value will pass away as soon as the concert is over. Instead of writing in characters, many of the ethnic minori-ties record their history by songs. "So their life, their battles, migrations and evolutions are all in their ancient mus-ic," explained He. Musicians able to perform such music are fewer and few-er. The complete score of *Baisha* Fine Music of Naxi ancient music has al-ready been lost. Only a few old musi-cians remain who know how to perform

some of the movements.

The problem is it's hard for au-dience's to enjoy the music. The hard-est step is to accept the repetition in the folk melodies, many of which are from religious music. The folk songs in Dong Ethnic Minority Music include many repetitions although the sing-ers' vocal range is large. The audience might be amazed by their technique at first, but soon get bored. There is also a language problem since most of the singers sing in their own dialect.

Folk art belongs to people and its color will fade away if it's squeezed into a small circle. When Naxi musicians came to Beijing in 1995, the impact of their performance was mostly confined within the circle of scholars and music majors. Later, they stepped out of con-

cert halls, performing at some colleges and public squares. "The effect was exceptionally wonderful," recalled He who was in charge of the performance at that time.

Qiao Jianzhong from China Music Institute has the same feeling, "Folk musicians aren't used to performing at concert halls since their music is born out of rural life." He also suggests an exhibition of folk instruments to ac-company the concerts.

Programs include Naxi Ethnic Mi-nority ancient music from Yunnan province; Dong, Buyi and Miao Mi-nority songs; instrumental and vocal music from Inner Mongolia; Uyghur Muqam suites; folk songs from Tibet, Qinghai, Shanxi and Shaanxi regions and provinces.

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Organic Tea

By Miao Yajie

A friend of mine once said that in this era of advertisement, many aspects of our lives are manipulated by the tastes of advertisers. From choosing a house to buying a dress, our true identity is overwhelmed by a relentless flood of ads. However, he added that fortunately, this does not extend to our taste in food and drink, including his favorite - tea! Your taste buds will tell you what is good and what is bad, and on this matter, he is absolutely right. My taste buds have urged me to visit a newly-opened teashop three times in the last two months for their key product: organic tea. Twice to shop for my family and once for my friend.

The teashop, with a teahouse upstairs, is called Gengxiang (更香) teashop. Located near the White Pagoda Temple (Baitasi 白塔寺), it is the tenth chain store opened by Beijing Gengxiang Tea Company. "With people paying closer attention to their health, organic tea, grown without pesticides, weed killers or chemical fertilizers has become a worldwide trend. Our Gengxiang organic tea is all grown at Wuyi (武夷), Zhejiang province, the home of organic tea," says Gong Xiaowei, manager of the Baitasi store.

"We are certified to process and market organic products by the Swiss based IMO." The tea in her store comes in two varieties: organic green tea and organic jasmine tea. Prices for green tea start from 50 yuan per kilo. The top of the range, *Supreme Cuijian* (翠剑极品), made from only the most tender tips, costs 1,600 yuan per kilo. My personal recommendation is *Wulu* (雾绿) at 100 yuan or *Mingmei* (明眉), 120 yuan per kilo. The latter is a little stronger than the former, but both have terrific flavor, aroma, and color. The jasmines and magnolias used to add aroma to tea are also organically grown at Gengxiang's organic flower base in Guangxi province.

There is a large refrigerator in the store to keep the green tea fresh. Every morning the sales assistants draw new tea from the freezer and put it into the tea canisters, and every evening after closing, they return any unsold tea to the freezer.

Another specialty of Baitasi Gengxiang tea store is their "beautifying tea". A type of tea especially formulated for those seeking to improve their complexions, it contains over ten kinds of dried flowers, such as rose, chrysanthemum, lily, honeysuckle, marigold, and the fruit of Chinese wolfberry. The sales assistants can mix various teas to order, according to customer's demands. If you suffer from a sensitive stomach, they will recommend one of their red teas, as red tea goes well with sugar, milk or even red wine, which will warm your stomach in the cold winter.

The store is offering free tea tasting until Christmas. Moreover, if you've already picked your favorite, next time you run out of tea, and don't have time to go shopping yourself, you can just call any of the Gengxiang branches, and they will deliver it to your house at no extra charge.

Add: 483 Zhaodengyulu (赵登禹路), Xicheng District. (East of the White Pagoda Temple, northwest corner of the crossroad).

Open: 9am-1pm for teashop on the first floor; 9am -1am for the teahouse on the second floor.

Tel: 66175372 (shop), 66175364 (teahouse).

Website: www.gx-tea.com.



Photo by Lounge

Fancy Dress

By Lydia

You can find shops selling traditional Chinese costumes all over Beijing, at scenic spots or in shopping malls, and most likely they will lighten your purse or wallet considerably. If you have an interest in buying such things, Panjiayuan Flea Market is a good place to pick up various kinds of traditional style dress at a much lower price than you would pay elsewhere.

Peddlers come to Panjiayuan from far and wide, bringing various kinds of traditional Chinese costumes from different regions, religions and ethnic minorities. They collect typical Chinese clothes from local people at a very low price and bring them here to sell.

Take the Miao costume for example. The Miao are an ethnic minority living in Hunan, Guizhou, Yunnan and Hainan provinces. Miao women are well known for their elaborate dress and silver ornaments, such as caps, neckbands, necklaces, capes, bracelets, earrings, hair clasps and rings. They have two types of costume; a splendid one for special occasions and a common one. Usually, it takes a whole year to make a splendid costume for festivals, weddings, and visiting relatives. At Panjiayuan, you can find a large quantity of Miao clothing in excellent condition piled on the ground or hanging from racks. It is obviously one of the best sellers here. It is possible to buy a complete outfit, including all the necessary silver ornaments, for no more than 1,500 yuan. This is definitely a bargain, considering you'd pay perhaps five times that amount in a shopping mall, and if you are a good bargainer, you might get it for even less!

Besides Miao clothes, Ming and Qing dynasty style costumes, traditional Tai Ji and Beijing Opera outfits, and various kinds of embroidered works are also popular with overseas visitors. Those collected from common people in remote areas have a more "antique" appearance. Our suggestion is to buy a new copy for wearing, and frame those old pieces, as they make wonderful decorations.

Add: Area 3, Panjiayuan Flea Market, beside south eastern Third Ring Road, Chaoyang District.

Time: 9am-5pm.

Panjiayuan

潘

Flea Market

ON YOUR MARK, GET SET...

By Lydia

Your sports nerve is sure to start twitching when you step into Sports City Cafe. This enormous American style sports bar, located on the third floor of the Gloria International Hotel, boasts five separate sections; the Arena, Basketball Bar, Racetrack, Games Room and the Wine & Cigar Bar. The walls are adorned with hundreds of sports pictures and pieces of sports memorabilia. The basketball bar is centered around a giant basketball gripped solidly in a player's hand, overhead hang larger than life sculptures mid-dunk or shot, while underfoot is a colorful racetrack. Everything here is aimed at arousing your sports enthusiasm, so - action now!

The bar features a half-sized basketball court inside, surely a first for Beijing. During the day you can practice shooting a few hoops if you need to let off some steam, and at night it becomes a dance floor, overseen by some very cool DJs. Over 50 television sets and large screens keep up a constant coverage of sports broadcasts of every kind, making it an ideal spot to get together with some friends to watch a game, no matter where in the world it's being played.

In the Games Room you can throw yourself into the world of golf, snooker, billiards, darts, pinball or table-football, as well as a host of electronic games. If all this activity seems a little too strenuous, you might prefer to head for the Wine & Cigar Bar, and relax with a Macanudo or Montecristo, washed down with a glass of Chilean red while perusing the latest magazines.

Anyway you cannot miss Sports City Cafe's mouth-watering American and Asian influenced cuisines of Olympic proportions, cool drinks and exciting cocktails. For two people, 100 yuan is enough to fill your stomach.

Add: 2 Jianguomen Nandajie, Chaoyang District, 3rd floor of Beijing Gloria International Hotel (凯莱酒店), bus 43, 48 or subway to Jianguomen.

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Buying a local apartment with foreign-approved renting license

By Wang Dandan

More and more apartment owners are going to the Beijing Real Estate Bureau and Beijing Security Bureau to obtain a license allowing them to rent their apartments to foreigners.

According to officials from the Beijing Real Estate Bureau, since China entered the World Trade Organization, there has been an increase in the number of applications for foreign-approved apartment licenses. That is to say, although a project may be a local one, it can be rented to foreigners after gaining approval from the above two bureaus.

Since the end of last year, owners of top quality apartments have been allowed to apply for this license. Initially there was little response, however China's WTO entry has triggered a substantial increase in license applications.

From the middle of October to the beginning of November, eight projects have been put forward for approval, and telephone inquiry calls have also increased.

Managers of Tianhong Dongrunfengjing, a newly licensed project, told reporters that they will cooperate with Dtz Debenham Tie Leung on a service. They will ask owners who are willing to rent their apartments, to decorate them to a specified standard (costing a minimum of 150,000 yuan). Then Daidelianghang will be responsible for the renting and relevant services, such as daily cleaning and making beds, similar to hotel housekeeping.

What is an apartment with foreign-approved renting license?

It should trace back to the sales and renting system in Beijing. According to the relevant regulations, foreigners can only buy or rent foreign-approved houses or rent local apartments with foreign-approved renting license. Most foreigners prefer to rent apartments near the east Third and Fourth Ring Roads.

However, most projects in the vicinity of the east Fourth Ring Road are local apartments. If foreigners rent them by themselves, they are not protected by the law, and neither are the owners.

Because of this market orientation, at the end of last year, a

regulation was approved stipulating that local apartments of good quality, can be rented by foreigners on granting of the relevant license.

WTO entry has pushed the development investment market, as more and more foreigners will come to Beijing to rent houses. However most foreigner-approved projects are sold at very high prices, upwards of 10,000 yuan per square meter, beyond the range of the majority of investors. So it is a better option to buy a local apartment with the license. With much less investment, the profit will be the same.

Reasons for the development of local apartments with license.

As there is expected to be an increasing demand from foreigners working in China, it is a good deal to buy a local apartment with license at a lower price, and rent it at the foreign-approved housing price.

There is little difference between local apartments and

foreign-approved apartments in terms of internal and external decoration, facilities and water and electricity supply.

Developers of local apartments with the license will find it easier to sell the house, as the purchaser can choose whether to rent it or to live in. Because of all these factors, more and more owners of local apartments will try to get a license.

Not all local apartments can get the license. Not all local apartments are suitable for renting to foreigners.

According to Yu Liang, officials from Beijing Real Estate Center, that the standards of approving a foreign-apartment renting license to a local apartment are as follows: the apartment should be examined by the Beijing Public Security Bureau and it should feature a 24 hour security system. These are the most important two factors. As for such features as satellite TV and 24-hour hot water, there are

no clear regulations.

First, they must be close to commercial areas, with good traffic and facilities, such as in the embassy area, the Lufthansa area and Asian Games Village area.

Also, the facilities should maintain a standard. The community district should be under automatic guarding system and satellite TV should be available. With proper decorations and home appliances, all these constitute a good living environment and will be easier to win favor with foreigners.

The profits of buying a local apartment with the license.

It takes less to buy a local apartment, according to staff from Dtz Debenham Tie Leung. Profit will be seen earlier than with the foreign-approved apartments. Take a 140 square meter apartment in Dongrunfengjing as an example; the monthly rent will be as much as 10,000 yuan, or 120,000 yuan annually. So within a few years, the investor will recoup their money.



What constitutes shared areas?

By Wang Dandan

Shared areas should only be related to the actual building the apartment owner lives in, according to the "Regulations on Apartments Sales".

It is nothing new that when you buy a new apartment, you also have to pay for shared areas. But what actually are the shared areas and how are they classified?

They are defined as the building lobby, door space, corridor, public toilets, the space in front of elevators and stairs, the stair well, elevator maintenance room, garbage area, fire control room, water pump room, water tank room, refrigeration room, emergency exit, electricity room, gas control room, satellite TV room, air-

conditioning room, hot water boiler room, crush-room for elevator workers, security room and property management offices.

The above are what you should pay for, however, there are other areas that you are not obliged to pay for, and if the developer wants to include them in the calculation of your payment, you can refuse.

Such areas include storage, parking lots for automobiles and bicycles, driveway, heating boiler room, basement serving as air-raid shelter, independent rooms such as the developer use to rent or for any other private use, guard rooms serving more than one building and property management rooms serving more than one building.

Office prices

China Life Tower:

Rent: US\$45/month/sqm(net)

Location: Chaoyangmenwai Avenue, Chaoyang District. It is only 100 meters away from Chaoyangmen subway station.

China Resources Building:

Rent: US\$36.8-38.8/month/sqm

Location: Jianguomen North Avenue, Dongcheng District.

CITIC Building:

Rent: US\$36/month/sqm(net)

Location: Jianguomenwai Avenue, Chaoyang District. Located in east part of Chang'an Avenue, with International Club on its west across the street, and the Embassy District on its south.

COFCO Plaza:

Rent: US\$42/month/sqm(net)

Location: Jianguomennei Avenue, Dongcheng District. Located in Jianguomennei Ave., facing Chang'an Street and close to Jianguomen and Beijing Railway Station and subway station.

Continental Building:

Rent: US\$19/month/sqm

Location: Gulouwai Street, Dongcheng District. Located between North Second Ring Road and North Third Ring Road.

Eagle Run Plaza:

Rent: US\$22-25/month/sqm

Location: Xiaoyun Road, Chaoyang District. It is across the street from the Third Embassy District and close to Lufthansa Center and 10 minutes walk to bus station at Third Ring Road.

First Shanghai Center:

Rent: US\$26/month/sqm

Location: Liangmaqiao Road, Chaoyang District.

Grand Place:

Rent: US\$26.5/month/sqm

Location: Anli Road, Chaoyang District. In Asian Game Village.

Hyundai Millennium Tower:

Rent: US\$28/month/sqm

Location: Xiaoyun Road, Chaoyang District. Being close to the Lufthansa Center and Landmark towers.

Jing An Center:

Rent: US\$23-26/month/sqm

Location: Zuojiazhuang, Chaoyang District. It is close to Beijing International Exhibition Center, Royal Hotel and Carrefour Supermarket and also near the Third Ring Road.

Lufthansa Center:

Rent: US\$52/month/sqm(net)

Location: Liangmaqiao Road, Chaoyang District. Close to east Third Ring Road.

Pacific Century Place:

Rent: US\$35/month/sqm

Location: Gongtibi Road, Chaoyang District. Close to East Third Ring.

Raycom Infotech Park Tower A:

Rent: US\$25-30/month/sqm (excluding management fee)

Location: Zhongkeyuannan Road, Haidian District.

Silver Tower:

Rent: US\$35/month/sqm

Location: Northeast Third Ring Road, Chaoyang District. Close to Hilton Hotel, located conveniently near the Third Ring Road and airport express way.

The Exchange Beijing:

Rent: US\$29.5/month/sqm

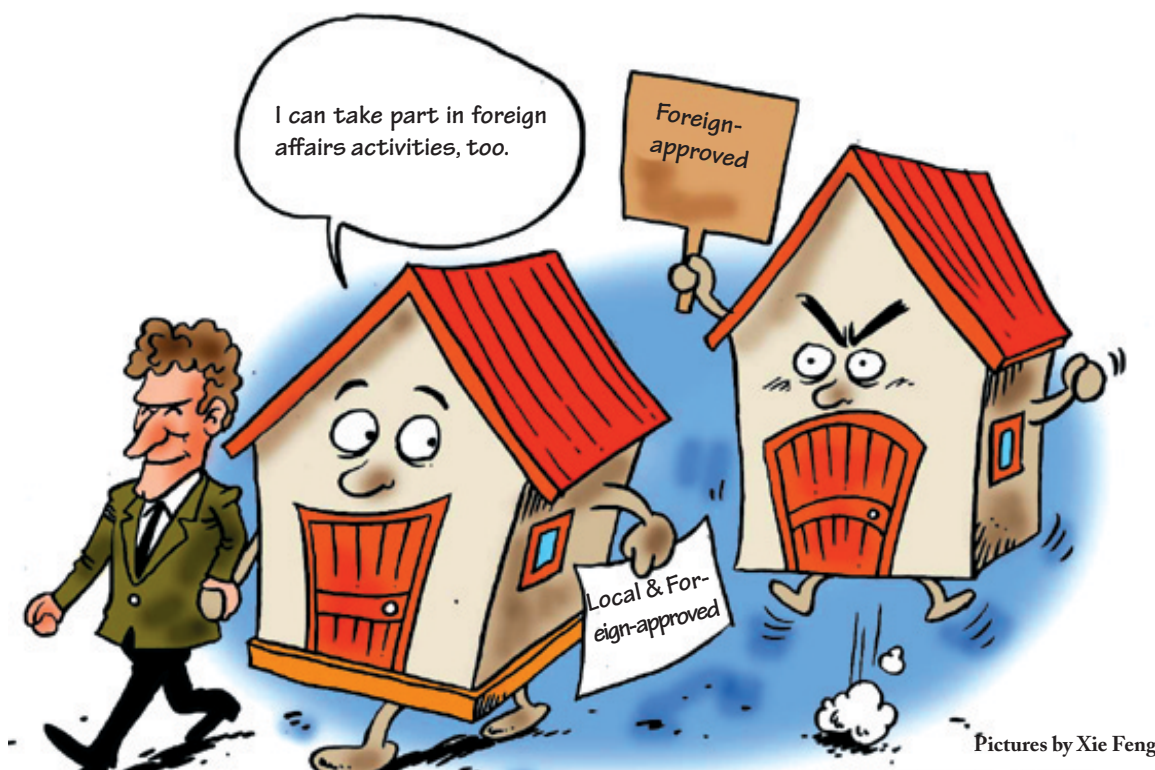
Location: Dongsanhuannan Road, Chaoyang District. Located at the intersection of Jianguomenwai Avenue and East Third Ring Road Expressway. Located right above the Guomao Subway Station.

Towercrest Plaza:

Rent: US\$20-22/month/sqm

Location: Xiaoyun Road, Chaoyang District. The Beijing International Airport remains a ten minutes' drive.

The above information is weekly updated and for reference only Dtz Debenham Tie Leung provides the above information. For further information, please go to www.dtz.com www.dtz.bj.cn Email: residential@dtz.bj.cn



Pictures by Xie Feng

Background: What is the difference between the two types of projects in the past? 1. Foreign-approved houses started in 1993 and were generally distinguished by being equipped with more advanced facilities, such as satellite TV system and so on. 2. Foreigners cannot buy local apartments. 3. Foreigners can rent foreigner-approved

apartments. 4. Foreigner-approved apartments can be used as an office. 5. There is no limit on property management fees for foreigner-approved apartments. It is usually \$1 per square meter per month, or even higher. 6. Foreigner-approved projects require permission from the Beijing Security Bureau before construction starts.

150,000 to redecorate the house

By Wang Dandan / Yan Ming

Few purchasers of new homes are willing to undertake the task of decorating it themselves, preferring to leave the job to the developer. Andy for example pre-bought a new house, leaving the decoration to the developer, as stated in the contract.

Andy liked the design of the apartment very much, it perfectly suited the needs of his family. But after waiting for a year for it to be completed, he found numerous problems soon after moving in. The doors would not close properly and the heating leaked, as did the taps in the bathroom.

Andy then went to the developer and asked for compensation, but was refused. The developer claimed he had not broken the

contract at all. Andy went to court to sue the developer, but only got compensation for the door.

The reason is simple; there was no detailed description of the type and brand of materials the developer should use, just vague terms such as "best" and "most advanced". There was nothing Andy could do but to cover the loss himself. It cost him 150,000 yuan to redecorate the house, despite the fact that the selling price included the cost for decoration.

Xu Chendi, a lawyer with Zhongsheng Law Firm, suggests that details such as brand names should be stipulated in the contract, as terms like "best" and "most advanced" have no legal bearing.



shanyanghu@sina.com

Guest
Quiz

Target: Grand Hotel Beijing
When: 14:30-15:30, Tuesday, Nov. 27th
Hotel Detective: Wang Dandan

Sian Barber, New Zealand

It is very convenient to live here, only a few steps away from Wangfujing Shopping Street. I like doing shopping in this street. You see, I am a little afraid of taking a local taxi. I can not speak any Chinese, even when I try to imitate they can not understand me. It is a good choice for me to live here. I just take my shopping back to my room on foot.

Hossam Wahballah, Egypt

I am sick of chain hotels. It is the same everywhere, even the smile! I can not understand why other hotels do not have such an atrium as they did here in this hotel! When I walk out of the room, I saw the green trees and flowers. And that's very nice for a morning! It is a pity most of the hotels are not aware of that.

Fouroughi Denawi, Germany

I am a hotelier myself in Germany. When I travel, I like to stay at a hotel in its nation's traditional style. It helps me to understand their culture more. And I like to share my experience here with my children.

By Wang Yang

Beijing
Homehelp

Panda Home Appliance Center

Tel: 68188747

Amoisonic Home Appliance Center

Tel: 68250460

Changhong Home Appliance Center

Tel: 800-8100610

Konka Home Appliance Center

Tel: 64638866

TCL Home Appliance Center

Tel: 62008700

Peony Home Appliance Center

Tel: 66020210

Haier Home Appliance Center

Tel: 86521999

Hisense Home Appliance Center

Tel: 63421111

"HOUSING" welcomes your feedback: What kind of difficulties do you encounter when looking for housing in Beijing? What kind of information do you need? What can we help you with? Our E-mail: housing@ynet.com Tel: 65902522 Fax: 65902525

Music

Genius Imagination China Symphony Orchestra. Hayden, Symphony No.104, D major; Korsakov, The Arabian Nights. Conductor: Shao En. **When:** Dec. 1, 7:30pm.

Sound of Music from the Orient and the West. Conductor, Lin Kechang; Violin, Lu Siqing. **When:** Dec. 6, 7:30pm.

Where: Both are at the Tianqiao Theater (天桥剧场), 30 Beiwailu (北纬路), Xuanwu District, bus 105, 106, 120. **Admission:** 50-280 yuan. **Tel:** 63030300.

World Classical Music Symphonic Concert The General Political Department Song & Dance Symphony Orchestra. **Where:** National Library Music Hall (国图音乐厅), 33 Zhongguancun Nandajie, Haidian District. **When:** Dec. 1, 7:30pm. **Admission:** 30-180 yuan. **Tel:** 88545501, 68419220.

Tian Zhen in Concert One of China's top female pop singers. **Where:** Capital Stadium (首都体育馆), Baishiqiao, Xizhimenwai Dajie, west of Beijing Zoo, bus 105, 107, 320 to Baishiqiao (白石桥). **When:** Dec. 7-8, 7:30pm. **Admission:** 280-480 yuan, 800 yuan VIP. **Tel:** 68335552.



New Sounds at Get Lucky Sands, Mixed Capsule and Second-hand Rose **When:** Dec. 1. Music Discussion between Spring & Autumn and Foreign Medias **When:** Dec. 2, afternoon. The Fragments of Sound and Wednesday's Journey **When:** Dec. 7. **Where:** Get Lucky (豪运酒吧), Taiyanggonglu, east of the south gate of the University of International Business and Economics. **Admission:** 30 yuan, 20 yuan for students. **Tel:** 64299109.

Music at Bars

Music Box, Sports City Cafe, Nov. 30, 10pm, 65158855-3349. Mitabe: band performance from Africa, Jam House, Nov. 30, 9pm, 65063845. Radiation Active Band, Schiller's 3, Nov. 30, 9pm, 65931078. Focus, Schiller's, Dec. 1, 9pm, 65931078. Jacqui Station Sugar Mama, Big Easy, Dec. 1, 9pm, 65086776. Afanti, Jam House, Dec. 1, 9pm, 65063845.

Weather

Friday
November 30

Clear to cloudy
Max: 11C. Min: -2C.

Saturday
December 1

Clear to cloudy
Max: 6C. Min: -4C.

Sunday
December 2

Clear to cloudy
Max: 6C. Min: -5C.

Monday
December 3

Clear to cloudy
Max: 5C. Min: -5C.

Tuesday
December 4

Cloudy
Max: 4C. Min: -4C.

Wednesday
December 5

Cloudy to clear
Max: 6C. Min: -4C.

Thursday
December 6

Clear
Max: 6C. Min: -4C.



We are glad to receive your feedback. If you need any help in your life, you can email us at bjtodayinfo@ynet.com or call 65902522
By Priscilla / Lydia / Hydie

Performances



Ballet Jazz from Montreal

Founded in 1997, les Ballet jazz de Montreal allies jazz with classical dance. The group will present brand new works choreographed in the last two years. Director: Louis Robitaille. Program: Pendulum, Ghost, selections of Swirling Songs, New dances, Unrestrained. Dancing directors: Crystal Pite, James Kudelka, Dominique Dumais, Shawn Hounsell, Mia Michaels. Music director: Tbkothy Sullivan, Robby McFerrin, Albert Sterling Menendez. **Where:** Beijing Exhibition Center Theater (北展剧场), 135 Xizhimenwai Dajie. **When:** Dec. 7, 7:30pm. **Admission:** 100-580 yuan. **Tel:** 68354455.

The Punchline Comedy Club

John Moorhead presents direct from London's Comedy Circuit, a trio of talented comedians, two from the UK and one from the US: Mickey Hutton, Marcus Brigstocks and Tom Rhodes. They will give a style of stand-up comedy that's earned them rave reviews and hundreds of gigs. **Where:** Capital Club (京城俱乐

部), Capital Mansion, 6 Xinyuannanlu (新源南路), Chaoyang District. **When:** Dec. 4-5, from 8:30pm. **Admission:** 220 yuan. **Tel:** 84552373, 65881337, 13910826384.



Goodbye to Cambridge University Again

Directed by Chen Wei, starring Wang Jing, Sha Jingchang, Guo Xiang and others. Conductor: Li Yuning. To commemorate the 70th anniversary of the death of Chinese poet Xu Zhimo, this opera features the love story of Xu, and Lin Huiyin, Liang Sicheng and Lu Xiaoman. **Where:** Mini theater of People's Art Theater (人艺小剧场), 22 Wangfujing Dajie, Dongcheng District, bus 101, 103 108 to Meishuguan, walk south 200 meters. **When:** Dec. 1-25, 7:15pm. **Admission:** 100 yuan. **Tel:** 65250123.

Handel's Messiah The first performance in Chinese, in China, since 1949. Chinese Symphony Orchestra and Choir and the China Film Symphony Orchestra. Conductor: Timothy Su. **Where:** Forbidden City Concert Hall, Zhongshan Park. **When:** Dec. 9, 7-10pm. **Admission:** 80-380 yuan. **Tel:** 64669294



Food

Yunnan Promotion at Dynasty Restaurant

Yunnan is a magic land of different nationalities, spectacular landscapes, unique culture and delicious food! Double Boiled Chicken Soup with Chinese Herbs, Braised Fresh Mushroom, Fried Fresh Mushrooms Chinese Parsley and Spicy Sauce, Fried Fresh Mushrooms with Chilli and many more. Guests who spend 100yuan enter a lucky draw for a return ticket to Kunming, a one month Health Club Membership, 500 yuan cash coupon and many more exciting prizes! **Where:** Jing Guang New World Hotel (京广中心), Chaoyang District. **When:** Dec. 3-16. **Tel:** 65978888 (Dynasty Restaurant)

Finnish Cuisine for X'mas Day A Christmas festival of Finnish cuisine. **Where:** St. Regis Hotel, 21 Jianguomenwai Dajie, bus 1, 4, 9 to Ritanlu. **When:** Dec 3-Dec 16. **Tel:** 64606688 ext. 2340.



First Wine Dinner at the Astor Grill A Bordeaux Chateau Experience dinner with Grand Cru Classe wine, chateau Haut Bage Liberal (Pauillac) and chateau Palmer (Mar-

gaux). The dinner will be hosted by a Maison Sichel representative from France and Summergate International Fine Wine Director. **When:** Nov 30, 6:45pm. **Admission:** 588 yuan. **Berry Bros & Rudd Fine Wine Dinner** **When:** Dec. 7, from 6:45 pm (reception, Wine Lounge); 7:30pm (dinner, Astor Grill). **Admission:** 999 yuan/person **Where:** Astor Grill (艾斯特扒房), Saint Regis Hotel, Jianguomenwai Dajie. **Tel:** 64606688.



German Christmas Bazaar

Homemade German cake, cookie, coffee. Feel free to expand your X'mas collection, including ornaments, cards and calendars. **Where:** 17 Dongzhimen Dajie, German Embassy. **When:** Dec 1, 11am-4pm. **Tel:** 65322161.

Special Shanghai Cuisine

The Four Seasons Restaurant specializes in contemporary Shanghai cuisine, combining western and Japanese influence. Try their mouth-watering crab! **Where:** Tianlun Dynasty Hotel, Wangfujing Street, Dongcheng District. **Tel:** 65138888 ext. 8136.

Activities

Chinese Culture Club

a. Every Tuesday Chinese Table Talk Chat in Chinese with friends and teachers around two tables. One table for beginners and one for intermediate level. Learn to read and write some Chinese, and also some street talk, jokes and songs. **Where:** Library Bar, 1F, Tower B, East Gate Plaza (中环广场), right behind Poly Plaza on the East Second Ring Road. (Opposite Baskin Robbins.) Subway to Dongsi Shitiao. **When:** every Tuesday, 7pm-9pm. **Fee:** 66 yuan / per week.

b. Learn Chinese Paper-cutting

Visit a tiny paper-cut gallery and studio in a traditional courtyard in a downtown hutong. **Where:** Liu Ren Paper-cut House (刘仁剪纸屋), No. 16 Shoushui Hutong, Xinwenhua Street, South of Xidan intersection, Xicheng District. **When:** Dec 1, Sat, 2:30pm-5pm.

c. Lecture on Chinese Rock Music Kaiser Kuo, an American Chinese has been playing music in China since 1990. He is a founder of the band Tang

Dynasty. Now he plays in his own band Spring & Autumn. **Where:** Get Lucky Bar, opposite south gate of Jingmao Daxue, Taiyanggong, northeast Beijing. **When:** Dec 2, 2:30pm-5pm. **Tel:** contact Feng Cheng at 8462-2081 / 1350-103-5145

Web: www.chinesecultureclub.org
Email: chinese_cultureclub@hotmail.com

Super Football Fans?

Club Football Bar, Beijing's pace-setting football, theme bar and restaurant. Big Screen. Exclusive memorabilia signed by some of the world's top players. International menu. Football from World Cup Qualifiers to the English Premiership, UEFA Champions League to the Spanish Primera! Dec 1: Manchester United vs Chelsea, 19:50pm; Dec 2: Fulham vs Leeds, 21:50pm; Everton vs Southampton, 12 midnight. **Where:** 10 Taipingzhuang, near Red House Hotel, Chunxiulu, Dongzhimenwai Dajie, Chaoyang District. **Tel:** 64150988/64167786.

Parties

Christmas Dinner Party 2001 French Style, real roast turkey and cranberry sauce, buffet with salad bar, hot & cold dishes, apple pie. All drinks 50% discount. Children's games and gifts, Christmas music and live band. **Where:** Le Bistrot des Chateaux, Jinglun Hotel (京伦饭店), 3 Jianguomenwai Dajie, Chaoyang District. **When:** Wednesday, Dec. 5, 6:30pm. **Admission:** 150 yuan for CCBC members, 250 yuan for non-members, free for children under 12. **Tel:** 85261820/21/22.

Magic Garden Party

Electronic music for serial clubbers. DJs Vstee, drum & bass, FDB Recordings, Paris; Maero, Funky House, Magic Garden; St. TTR (St. Pierre) Tiny Teck. Master of French music, St. TTR has been spinning at clubs, rave parties and prestigious gathering from London to Johannesburg through Montreal and Saigon. **Where:** Huadu Hotel (华都饭店), 8 Xinyuannanlu, North Sanlitun Road, Chaoyang District. **When:** Dec. 7, from 10:30pm. **Admission:** 70 yuan in advance, 100 yuan at the door. **Tel:** 13801085286, 13910847817.



Movies



Happy Times Chinese film with English subtitles. Director: Zhang Yimou, starring Zhao Benshan, 2000. A middle-aged, not-too-successful working guy wants to find his bride. He meets a woman of appetites; a portly, pushy "princess" who is convinced that she and her son are matchless. She wants the man to take care of her stepdaughter. Then a moving comedy begins. **Where:** Cherry Lane movies, Intl. Conference Hall, Sino-Japanese Youth Exchange Center, 40 Liangmaqiaolu, 1km east of the Kempinski Hotel. **When:** Dec. 7, 8pm. **Admission:** 50 yuan. **Tel:** 64615318/9.

Love Fall Directed by Yun Suk Bo, starring Song Hyu Kyo, Song Seung Hun. **Where:** 5F, Hyundai Millennium Tower (现代盛世大厦), 38 Xiaoyunlu, Chaoyang District. **When:** Dec. 7, 5:30pm. **Tel:** 84538112-4.

Italian Movies

Roma Citta Aperta (Rome, Open City); Paisan (Guerrilla Forces), directed by Roberto Rossellini (1906-1977). **Where:** Space for Imagination Coffee Shop, 5 Xiwangzhuang Xiaoku, opposite Tsinghua University, Haidian District. **When:** Dec. 1, 7pm. **Tel:** 62791280.

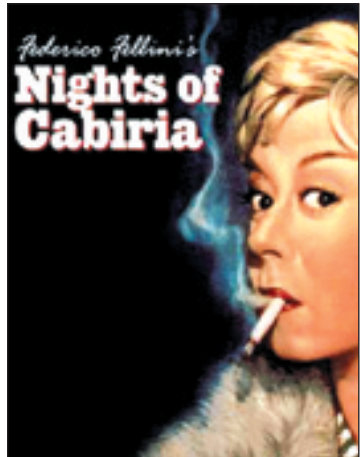
Il Bidone (The Swindle)

Directed by Federico Fellini, starring Broderick Crawford, Richard Basehart, Giulietta Masina and Franco Fabrizi. 1955. One of Fellini's least seen films, but an amazing one. It reflects the di-

rector's love and compassion for all humanity. **When:** Nov. 30, 7pm. **Le notti di Cabiria (Nights of Cabiria)** Directed by Federico Fellini, starring Giulietta Masina, who won Best Actress at Cannes. 1957. Oscar winner for Best Foreign Language Film, it is a tragic



story of a naive prostitute living in a poor section of Rome, where she owns her little house, has a bank account, and dreams of a miracle. **When:** Dec. 6, 7pm. **Where:** Cultural office, Italian Embassy, 2 Sanlitun Dong'erjie, Chaoyang District. **Tel:** 65322187.



Exhibitions

Beijing International Motorcycle Exhibition **Where:** Beijing International Exhibition Center (国展), 6 Beisanhuan Donglu, next to Carrefour, Chaoyang District. **When:** till Dec. 3. **Tel:** 84601800.



Works by Jia Youfu Professor of China Central Academy of Fine Arts, Jia's works reflect his love for nature and focus on scenery at dusk. **Where:** Melodic Art Gallery (墨岚画馆), 14 Jianguomenwai Dajie, Chaoyang District, opposite Beijing Friendship Store. **When:** Dec. 1-31, 9am-5pm. **Admission:** free. **Tel:** 65158123.

Ink Paintings from Qingdao

Where: International Art Palace (国际艺苑画廊), 48 Wangfujing Dajie, Dongcheng District. **When:** Nov. 30-Dec. 5, 9am-5pm. **Admission:** free. **Tel:** 65133388-1207.

Winter Oil Painting Vivid colors and unexpected painting skills. **Where:** Qin Gallery, 38 Fangcaodi-beijie, bus 28 to Fangcaodi, Chaoyang District. **When:** Nov 30-Dec 12, 10am-7pm. **Tel:** 65074062 / 65868929.

Ink & Wash Joint Exhibition

Featuring works by Han Shuli, Xiao Shunzhi and Du Jie. **Where:** Creation Gallery, north end of Ritan Beilu, Chaoyang District. **When:** till Dec. 2, 10am-7pm. **Admission:** free. **Tel:** 65067570.





Outdoor Action

Underground Adventuring

By Yang Bo

Xiangxi Miao and Tu Autonomous Region (湘西苗族土家族自治区) is located in the northwest of Hunan (湖南) Province. Longshan (龙山) County of Xiangxi features countless water-eroded caves. Few of which have been explored. Flying Tiger (飞虎), Wind (风) and Catfish (鲇鱼) Cave have been lately discovered by cavers as places ideal for caving adventures.

Flying Tiger Cave

The first floor of this cave is a large chamber, covering an area of 5,000 square meters. The enormous chamber seems to swallow the light emitted by the most high-powered lamp. After about ten minutes walk, you will come to the end of the chamber. Here a slippery vertical wall provides access to the second floor of the cave. It is not an easy climb, and you will need a pack of climbing equipment.

On the second floor, you will first find some extremely beautiful stalactites. Walk into the main passage along a small stream, two hours later, you will come to a small pool. Here you can always find many strange underground creatures. Fish, shrimps and loaches here all have transparent bodies. With the aid of lamp, you can see their internal organs clearly. One kind of fish resembles a giant salamander. Walk for another hour, and you will come to the end of the cave. If you want to go further, you can walk into a narrow offshoot in the wall. At the other end of this branch is a small chamber. You can try climbing up the wall of the chamber.

This part of the caving adventure takes around seven hours in total.

Wind Cave

The mountains in which the Flying Tiger Cave and Wind Cave are respectively located stand next to each other, separated by a river.

Entrance to the Wind Cave lies in the mountainside. The entrance is about 1.8 meters high. A strong wind blows out of the entrance constantly, so strong that it is difficult to stand near it. The nearer you get to the entrance, the greater the effort required to keep your balance.

Once you get into the cave however, the wind drops suddenly. The shapes of the stalactites in the cave are even

stranger than those in Flying Tiger Cave.

After 500 meters, the cave branches. The two branch caves are alike in size and shape, making it difficult to tell which is the major one. However, you have to go on, so choose the one on the left.

The further you go into this branch, the more magnificent the scenery becomes. The biggest stalactite here is some thirty meters high. Pools of water will also be found one after another en route. However, there are no strange creatures to be found in them. Two hours later, you'll come to the end of this cave.



Photos by Yang Bo

Return to the spot where the cave branches, and take the right side. This cave descends steadily from the very beginning. It is so big that you can hardly see the roof overhead and you feel at times as though you are walking through a grand hall. A narrow stream runs along the floor of the cave.

Two hours later, the cave becomes very narrow, and starts to climb again. The stream rushes into a bottomless pit beside the meter-wide path, and you had better stop here, as

no one knows what is waiting ahead!

Catfish Cave

When you get out of Wind Cave, you can visit another cave named Catfish Cave in the same mountain.

Catfish Cave is partially under water and it is inhabited by Catfish and giant salamander. You can hire a small boat for your adventure in this cave. Inside, the only sound is that of the oars and light, that of your lamp. You have to duck your head sometimes to avoid bumping it on the rocks overhead. As it so dark, there is not much in the way of beautiful views.

Tips:

You'll need some decent rock climbing equipment; A local guide is a must; Bring plenty of batteries and spare torch/lamp bulbs;

How to get there:

Train k267 from Beijing West Railway Station to Zhangjiajie (张家界) City (1653 kilometers, 353yuan for hard sleeper); the train departs Beijing at 12:12pm and get to Zhangjiajie at 11:45am the next day. Then bus from Zhangjiajie to Longshan County (200 kilometers, six hours), 50 yuan per person (80 yuan on holidays); last taxi from Longshan County to the caves, 150 yuan per day.

Zhangbi Ancient City

By Jiang Zhong

For those interested in local-style houses, Zhangbi Ancient City (张壁古堡) in Shanxi (山西) province is a must see place. Zhangbi was built in A.D. 619, and is of great value in the study of ancient Chinese architecture. There are many ancient tunnels in the city, which could station thousands of soldiers for both offensive and defensive use. Meanwhile, the city mixes traditional Chinese cultural elements in military, religious, dwelling, folk custom areas.

The tiny city consists of a fortress, palaces, temples, and courtyards designed and built in Buddhist, Taoist and Confucian style with luxuriant plants and comfortable climate within.

Zhangbi City is dedicated to folk customs such as paper-cutting, embroidery and rural folk dance, and is a place with strong cultural background, where many ethnic groups lived together.

Temples

Surprisingly, considering the city's size, there are several temples, including Guandi (关帝), Zhenwu (真武), Erlang (二郎) Temples, Kongwang (空王佛) Temporary Palace, and Xinglong (兴隆) Temple



One of the two main streets

and the sites of Bodhisattva Dizangwang (地藏王) Palace and Luzu (吕祖) Temple. Most of them were built 800 year ago, before the Ming Dynasty. It is worth mentioning that the glazed tile carvings in Zhenwu Temple and Kongwang Temporary Palace are beautifully and exquisitely designed, under which the two glazed tablets are the only ones of their kind in China.

Tunnels

Zhangbi's ancient tunnels are on a grand scale and of a peculiar structure, with a total length of five kilometers and average height of 1.6 meters. They are laid out in a three-dimensional style with three layers connecting each other to the outside world. Judging from the already cleared one-kilometer tunnel, the Zhangbi tunnels compose a marvelous

and complete underground city.

First, the tunnel designing theory is quite ingenious, with not only tiny conduits for voice communication, but also observation holes for keeping watch on the enemy's movements.

Second, the tunnels are fully equipped with facilities such as wells, granaries, lantern stands, stables, as well as offensive facilities like pitfalls, hidden openings for archers and channels for water irrigation.

The design of the tunnels allow for various military maneuvers, such as retreating and advancing, taking offensive and defensive actions, and is of highly value to military historians.

Local-style dwelling houses

Zhangbi Ancient City has clear and neat city layout with the two main south and north roads laid out in a T shape and seven alleys. The alleys are all in picturesque disorder, four on the west side, and three on the east.

The city also boasts some well-preserved houses built in the Sui and Tang dynasties, a rare sight in other ancient cities in China. A memorial archway and inner buildings are in good harmony, and are described as a



One of the two glazed tablets at Kongwang Temporary Palace

“city within the city”. The houses are at some distance from the defensive walls, and the gates of each house have many steps underneath. In ancient times, the wealthy families lived in the western part of the city. The doorways to these houses were decorated with exquisite brick, wood and stone carvings. All the carvings tell folk custom stories, like lions playing with a silk ball, and magpies singing in the plum branches, symbolizing everlasting blessings.

How to get there:

Train K701 from Beijing Railway Station to Taiyuan (太原), the train departs Beijing at 9:13pm and get to Taiyuan at 7:30am the next morning (568 kilometers, 79 yuan for hard seat and 149 yuan for hard couch). Then bus to Jiexiu (介休two hours, 30 yuan) **Admittance:** 20 yuan



Wengcheng, a defense complex in the ancient city



Ancient houses in the city

Day Tour of Fangshan Historic Sites

By Han Daqing

Chang Le Temple (常乐寺) - Tombs of Ming Dynasty Palace Eunuchs (明宦官墓) - Yao Guangxiao Pagoda (姚广孝塔)

These three historic sites will create an unforgettable impression, despite the fact that they are shabby and poorly maintained, and seldom mentioned in tour brochures.

Chang Le Temple

Chang Le Temple is famous for its stone tablets and colored painting. Among the stone tablets, the best preserved was made during the rule of Ming Emperor Xianzong (1464-1487), and even the inscriptions on it can still be clearly read.

The temple features two rows of palaces, including six main halls, five side halls and a grand front entrance. All the buildings are still in good condition in terms of architectural structure, although some parts are somewhat ragged. The famous colored painting can be seen along the corridors connecting both sides of every main hall in the temple.

The Ming Dynasty Palace Eunuchs' Tombs

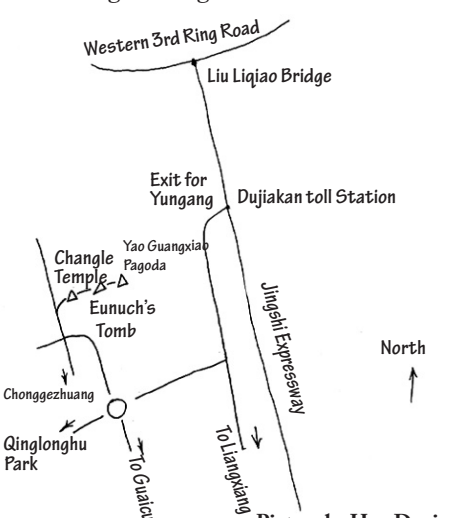
The powerful palace eunuch of the Ming Dynasty, Wang An and another palace eunuch were buried in the tombs connected with the Chang Le Temple. With a diameter of four kilometers, the tombs, the largest such tombs in the Beijing area, are surrounded by a stone wall four meters high.

There are two doors at the east and west sides of the south wall, and upon each door is a horizontal inscribed board and besides each door are antithetical couplets carved in stone, which can be easily read even today. There are many kinds of fruit trees planted in the yard of the tomb. At the north end of the yard, stand the round tombs. The diameter of the tombs is about three meters

Cultural Tour



Yao Guangxiao Pagoda



Picture by Han Daqing

or so, and on the base of the tombs are floral designs carved in the stone. The local people call the tombs Lao Gong Tombs, which means the palace eunuchs were buried there.

Yao Guangxiao Pagoda

Yao Guangxiao, born in 1335 and died in 1418, was a great politician, military general, historian and poet as well. He helped emperor Zhu Li establish the Ming Dynasty and so cemented his place in history.

The Yao Guangxiao Pagoda was built upon his tomb and was made of bricks in the shape of an octagon. It has nine stories and towers some 33 meters above the ground. The top of the pagoda is in a bottle gourd shape and is made of iron. The statues on the middle part of the pagoda are very lively, and well preserved. The one side of the pagoda body, there is an inscription carved on the wall, while the other side is decorated with carved fake doors and windows. There are also lotus decorations on three stories from the base of the tower. In front of the pagoda under the south slope, there is a stone tablet held by gods and ghosts. Emperor Yong Le wrote the inscriptions on the tablet himself.

Tips:

- You can visit all these sights in one day.
- Set out by car from Beijing at 9:00 am and you will arrive at Chang Le Temple at 10:30 am.
- You can have a picnic, but you may not light a fire there.
- You can have lunch at local people's homes, usually for around 10-15 yuan per person.
- There are small restaurants along the road.